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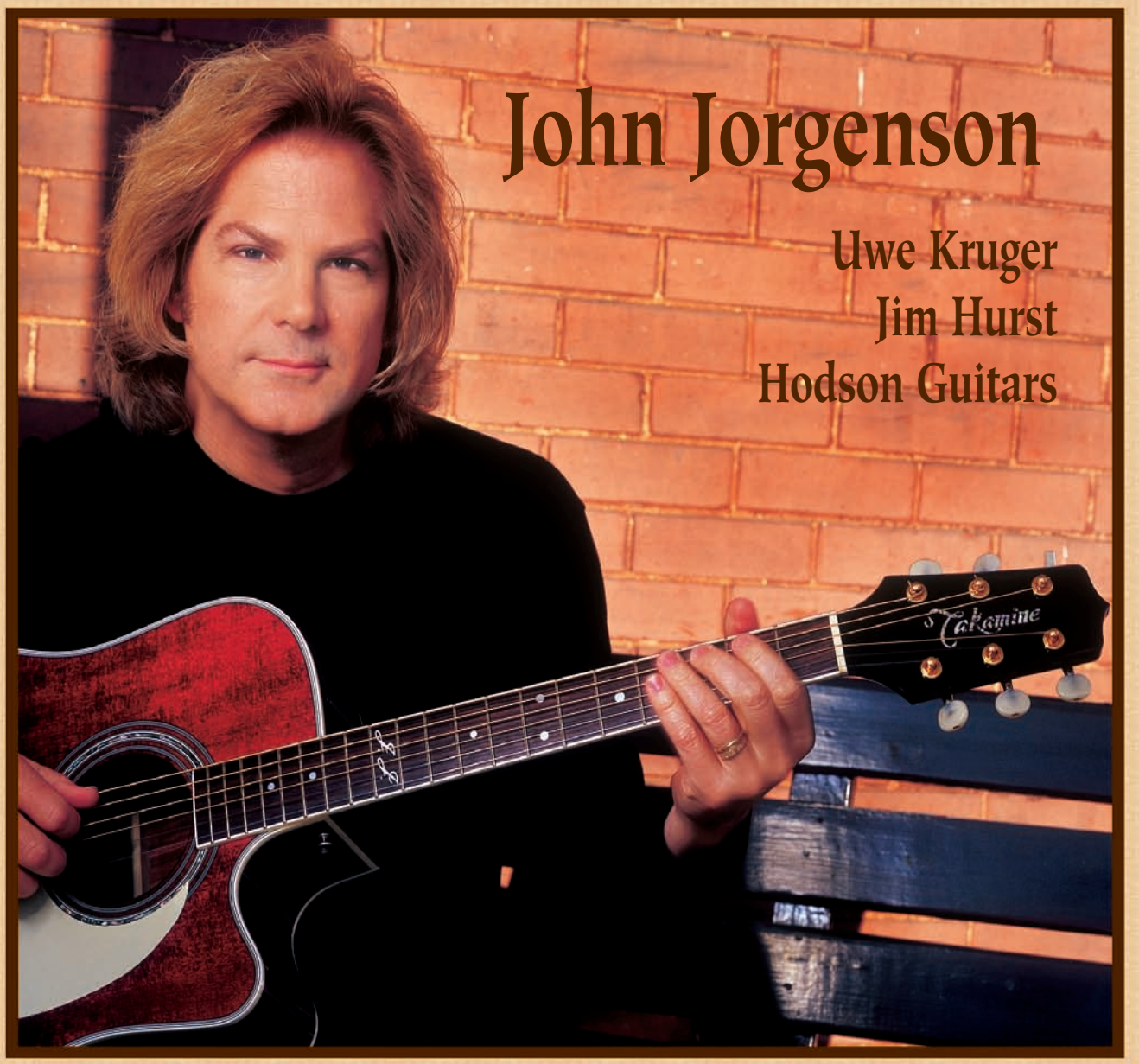
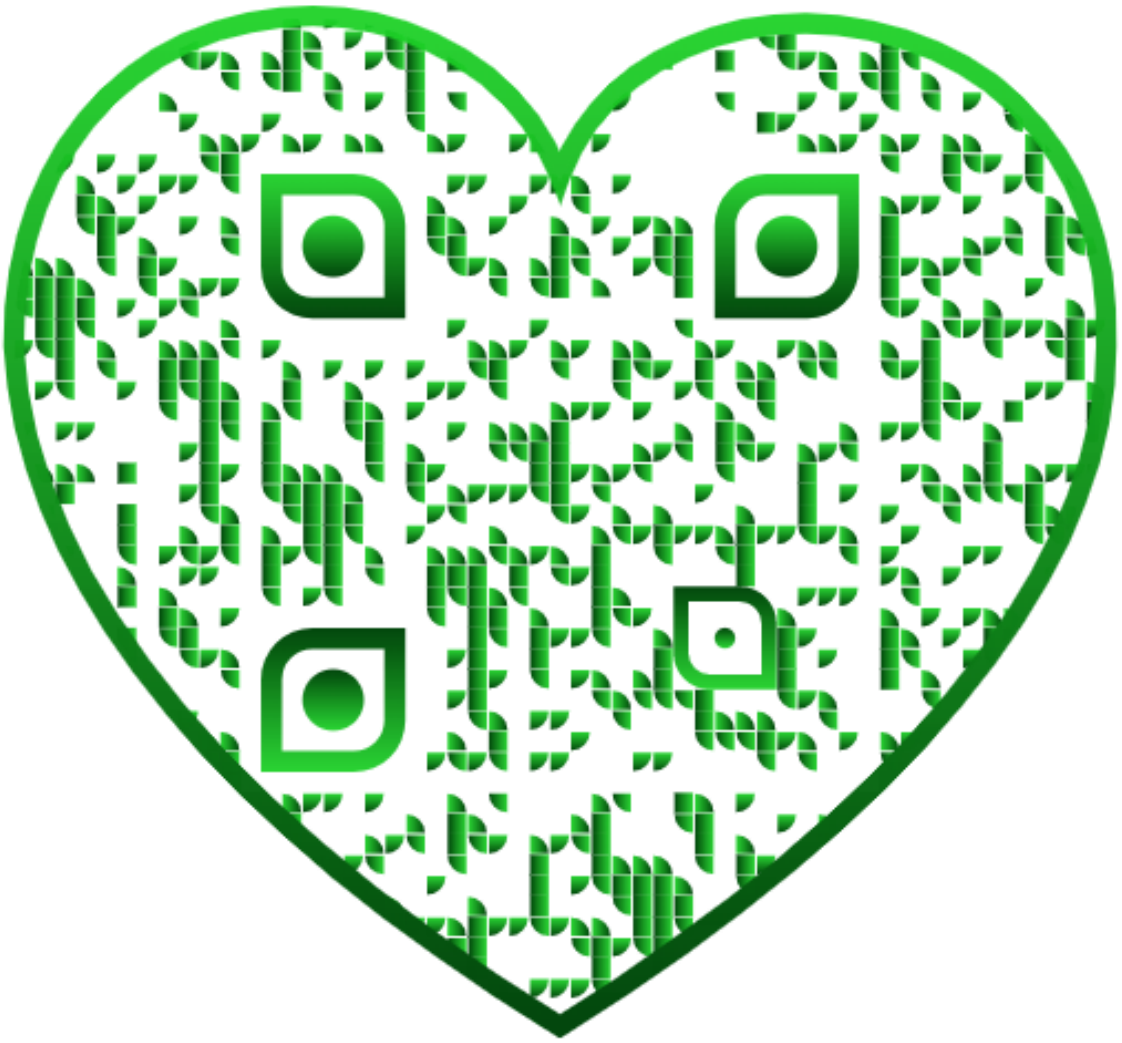
Volume 6, Number 6 September/October 2002





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How to Duplicate & Promote an Acoustic CD Release

1. **Send your music to radio.** No matter how you define your goals, you need to get your music to folk radio. One excellent way to do this is through a **radio-oriented sampler CD program**, such as the OASISACOUSTIC™ sampler CDs, which get the music of Oasis clients to hundreds of key radio stations throughout the U.S.

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3. **Think "retail-friendly" when packaging your CD.** Your CD needs to look as good as it sounds. While jewel-box packaging is still very popular, as an alternative you may want to consider eye-catching **cardboard substitutes for the jewel box.** such as the patented **Oasis Jewel-Free™ Box**.

4. **Work with a reputable duplication company:**

• **Ask for references.** Who are the company's clients? Do they include artists and labels you respect? (Oasis is proud of our work, for example, with Trout Fishing in America, David Wilcox, Trapezoid, Chris Smither, Brooks Williams, Steven King, Salamander Crossing...)

• **Do they understand your music and your market?** If you're going to Kerrville for the first time, do they understand what this means? If your guitar sounds too tinny, do they know how to fix it? Nerissa Nields (The Nields) says "We love dealing with a company that knows and cares who we are. Oasis is fantastic; they manufactured our CDs in time to make sure we had them for our CD release at the Iron Horse. And the quality is superb."

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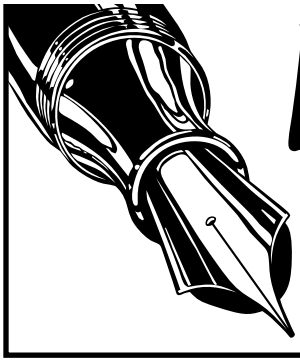


EDITOR'S PAGE

Gary Cook Update

As those of you who are members of the Flatpick-L internet group will know, flatpicker extraordinaire Gary Cook's house and recording studio burnt to the ground this summer, casualties of the fires that ranged through much of southern Colorado. Gary is a two-time national flatpicking champion and a member of the Bar-D Wranglers of Durango, Colorado. When word of this tragedy was posted on Flatpick-L many member of the list inquired as to how they may lend aid to Gary and his family.

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine has been in contact with Gary and have worked out a way in which flatpickers can help Gary and improve their guitar playing at the same time. A win-win situation. We are currently working on a compilation CD and transcription book which will feature the best cuts from Gary's three solo projects: *Western Standard Time* (out of print), *Now and Then*, and *Great American Train Classics*. There will be 16 cuts on the CD, which will be packaged with the transcription book and published by Mel Bay Publications. All of the transcribers, editors, layout artists, and designers are volunteering their time and effort so that all proceeds will go directly to Gary and his family. The book/CD package should be out later this year, or early next year. We thank all of the transcribers and Mel Bay Publications for their involvement in this project. If you would like to help out a fellow flatpicker, and one heck of a nice guy, and get yourself tabs to some great guitar solos, call *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* and order the Gary Cook transcription book. We will start taking orders right away and send you the book when it is ready.

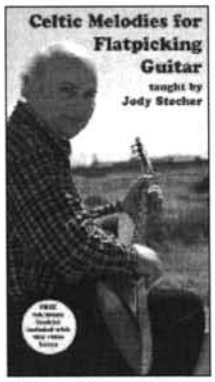
Gary and his wife had to stay in a hotel for several weeks after the fire, but have now moved into a temporary residence and are working with insurance companies to evaluate the damage and begin reconstruction of their home and studio. We wish them all the best during their recovery form this devastating event.

Brad Davis Jam Videos on CD and DVD

We will soon be releasing Brad Davis' popular *Flatpick Jam, Volumes I & II* on audio CD and DVD. The popularity of these two videos has been overwhelming and the material here lends itself very well to the CD and DVD formats. The CDs are available now. The DVDs should be ready by Christmas. Additionally, Brad was recently in our studio and we filmed *Volume III* of the series. This volume will be ready in video, CD, and DVD formats by Christmas. Check our website: www.flatpickingmercantile.com for the latest release dates.

Bluegrass Lead Guitar
taught by Scott Nygaard

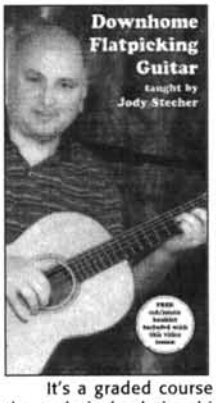
In this video, renowned guitarist Scott Nygaard guides you through the old-time fiddle tune *Little Billy Wilson*, a crosspicking arrangement of *Home Sweet Home*, a melodic solo on the blues song *Trouble in Mind* and shows you how to combine these influences when creating a solo on a bluegrass tune like *East Virginia Blues*. Scott explains in detail the techniques needed to master the bluegrass lead guitar style and the ideas behind his arrangements. All are clearly illustrated in split-screen close-ups. ***GW604 $29.95***



Celtic Melodies for Flatpicking Guitar
taught by Jody Stecher

The colorful tones of the guitar are well suited to the music of Ireland and Scotland. Jody Stecher has developed a unique approach to flatpicking Celtic music drawing on the sounds and techniques of the harp, fiddle and pipes. This video lesson presents a graded course starting with simpler fingering with special attention to picking techniques. Building on a base of a confident and deliberate right hand, more challenging left hand work is gradually introduced.

Titles include: ***Reel*** *Sheehan's Reel •* ***Jig*** *The Connaughtman's Rambles •* ***March*** *A Trip To Mabou Ridge •* ***Strathspey*** *The Devil In The Kitchen •* ***Reel*** *Muilleann Dubh •* ***Reel*** *Doctor Gilbert* ***GW605 $29.95***



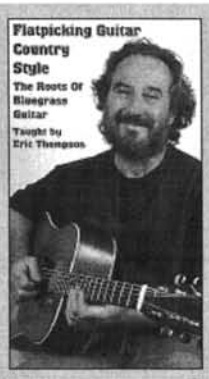
Downhome Flatpicking Guitar
taught by Jody Stecher

Jody Stecher has long been America's least generic flatpicker. This video is both a roadmap of Jody's development as a flatpicking guitarist of mostly American vernacular music, and a guide to how any flatpicker can expand their expressive technique. Think of it as *"Flatpicking According to Jody"*.

It's a graded course starting with basics in which the technical relationship between fingerpicking and flatpicking is made clear. The first few pieces are great songs with memorable melodies but minimal fingering so that right hand fundamentals can be mastered. With each new tune more techniques are introduced and more and more fingerboard is used, both horizontally and vertically. The second half of the video is purely instrumental music and the tunes are more complex.

Titles include: Carter's Blues, It's Hard To Love, I Got A Bulldog, Leake County Blues, Arkansas Traveler, The Dawn and The Ship in Full Sail ***GW606 $29.95***

Flatpicking Guitar Country Style
The Roots of Bluegrass Guitar
Taught by Eric Thompson



Eric Thompson will have you flatpicking lead breaks in styles from Maybelle Carter to Doc Watson. You'll learn to pick out the melody to songs like *East Virginia Blues, Sad and Lonesome Day* and *Shady Grove*. You will learn to embellish your playing with "hammer-ons" and "pull-offs" for the real old-time country sound. You'll build a solid technique, advancing step-by-step through single note arrangements of *Thompson's Rag*, fiddle hoedowns *Arkansas Traveler* and *Soldier's Joy*, and a bluesy bluegrass break for *Good Old Mountain Dew* (employing slippery slides and hot runs). Eric's invaluable tips on left hand fingering and right hand pick technique are clearly illustrated in split-screen close-ups.

GW 601 $29.95

Flatpicking Fiddle Tunes
Reels, Rags & Hoedowns
Taught by Eric Thompson

Old-time fiddle tunes are the bedrock upon which acoustic guitar flatpicking is built. Eric Thompson's strong, melodic picking has set a benchmark for taste and tone for nearly four decades. In this video Eric shares soulful arrangements of seven of his favorites, guiding you slowly, line-by-line through classics like *Texas Gals, Fish In The Millpond,* Scottish-Irish rooted *Miller's Reel* and *Stony Point,* mountain modal *Falls of Richmond,* swingin' *Kennedy Rag* and the bouncy *East Tennessee Blues.* You'll build your repertoire and hone your technique, exploring fingering patterns in six different keys which are all clearly illustrated in split-screen close-ups. ***GW 602 $29.95***

Bluegrass Crosspicking Guitar
Taught by Eric Thompson

Crosspicking is an exciting flatpicking technique that is an essential part of every bluegrass guitarist's arsenal. Utilizing repeated patterns on three-string groups, crosspicking captures the bounce of a fiddler's double shuffle and the drive of three-finger banjo Scruggs-style rolls. Eric Thompson lays it out for you in easy to understand steps, illustrating the basic patterns with arrangements of *Fly Around My Pretty Little Miss, Blackberry Rag, Beaumont Rag, Wildwood Flower,* and *Cross-eyed Fiddler.* Split-screen close-ups let you see exactly what and how Eric is playing. ***GW 603 $29.95***

Beginner's Country Guitar
taught by Fred Sokolow

All you need to put over a good country song is your voice and a guitar. This video lesson gives you the tools you need to play old-fashioned country, honky-tonk and country rock. You'll learn how to play: Accompaniment strums for different rhythmic feels; a variety of first-position chords; bass runs; major scales; solos and turnarounds.

Tunes include: Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain, I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry, The Bottle Let Me Down, I'm Movin' On, Will The Circle Be Unbroken, Silver Wings and Jambalaya, ***GW407 $29.95***

Flatpicking Country Classics
taught by Fred Sokolow

In this 75 minute video Fred teaches nine standards every country picker/singer should know... from start to finish. You'll learn an intro for each song, a backup pattern and bass runs to play while singing, an instrumental solo, and an ending. Picking up where his *BEGINNER'S COUNTRY GU1TAR* video left off, Fred keeps the arrangements fairly simple but includes a few up-the-neck chord positions and hot licks. You'll learn solos and runs in five different keys. Each song is played at regular speed and then slowed down on a split-screen that gives you a close-up look at the picking hand and the chording hand.

Tunes include: New San Antonio Rose, Wild Side of Life, Waltz Across Texas, The Race is On, Beautiful Kentucky Waltz, That's the Way Love Goes, I Don't Hurt Anymore, Someone I Used To Know and City of New Orleans ***GW410 $29.95***

Basic Country Flatpicking Guitar
taught by Dix Bruce

Hot guitar licks abound these days but simple melodies played along with chord strums on the low strings of the guitar have never lost their appeal. Pioneered in the 1920s by the great Mother Maybelle Carter, this combination of lead and rhythm guitar playing is the foundation upon which all traditional country, folk, bluegrass, and hot flatpicking guitar is based. In this video lesson Dix Bruce carefully teaches lead and backup guitar to nine great and classic country, bluegrass, and folk standards, ballads and hot breakdowns played by musicians the world over.

Tunes include: Worried Man Blues, Lonesome Valley, Storms Are On the Ocean, Handsome Molly, Wildwood Flower, Redwing, John Hardy, Jimmie Brown the Newsboy ***GW308 $29.95***

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John Jorgenson

John Jorgenson (far left) with Emmy Lou Harris, Vern Gosdin, and Chris Hillman at the American Music Shop in 1990

John Jorgenson is arguably the most versatile guitar player on the planet. As such he is also one of the most highly sought after musicians for both studio and road work. The list of artists that he has performed and recorded with reads like a who's-who of rock, pop, country, bluegrass, and folk music. Consider the following:

- John has performed with Elton John, Roy Orbison, Little Richard, George Michael, Sheryl Crow, Chris Hillman, k.d. lang, Bob Dylan, Buck Owens, Earl Scruggs, Carl Perkins, Sting, Emmy Lou Harris, Dan Fogelberg, Hank Williams Jr., Rodney Crowell, Roger McGuinn, Melissa Etheridge, Michael Hedges, Don Henley, Darol Anger, Mike Marshall, Steve Earle, Tommy Emmanuel, Bob Brozman, and Dwight Yoakum.
- John has recorded with Elton John, Bonnie Raitt, Ricky Nelson, The Byrds, Bob Seger, Willie Nelson, Barbra Streisand, Earl Scruggs, Hank Williams Jr., Mary Chapin Carpenter, Carlene Carter, John Prine, Michael Nesmith, Marty Stuart, Johnny Cash, Pam Tillis, Roger McGuinn, Mark O'Connor, Travis Tritt, Tanya Tucker, Rodney Crowell, Lyle Lovett, Trisha Yearwood, Jerry Douglas, David Grisman, Darol Anger, Rose Maddox, Bobby Vinton, Juice Newton, Beppe Gambetta, and Luciano Pavarotti (to just name a few)
- John was a founding member of the Rhythm Brothers (a highly respected Gypsy jazz band in Southern California).
- With Chris Hillman, he co-founded the Desert Rose Band (the Grammy-nominated, critically acclaimed band with five number one singles, four CDs, touring, recording, TV appearances, etc.).
- He was also co-founder of The Hellecasters (award-winning instrumental guitar trio, with three CDs, touring, TV appearances, etc.).
- From 1995 through 2000 he toured and recorded with Elton John playing electric and acoustic guitars, saxophone, pedal steel guitar, bass, and vocals.

Written by Dan Miller

John first received mention in *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* in our Django Reinhart issue (Volume 6, Number 3 March/April 2002) in Dave McCarty's article "Django's Heirs." Many who follow Gypsy jazz guitar list John as one of the true American masters of that style. However, the amazing thing about John is that those who follow country guitar, bluegrass guitar, and rock

guitar will say the same thing about his playing in those genres.

Bryan Sutton, who plays with John in the Hot Club of Nashville says, "The thing that has most fascinated me about John is the number of different styles he has mastered. He has conquered the nuances that make each style what they are. Everything he does is very thorough and true to the style."

Brad Davis, who performs with John in Earl Scruggs' band says, "John has mastered many styles down to the letter, but what blows me away is the way he can honor the style and honor the tune, but still leaves his thumbprint—you can tell it is him, it is identifiable. For me that is the icing on the cake for any player. With Earl, John plays electric on 'Foggy Mountain Breakdown' and he will knock you a new one every time he takes a solo. He is a fun cat to play with."

Earl Scruggs himself says, "To say that John is a superlative guitarist is an understatement. He is simply great."

In addition to his incredible talent on guitar and his overall musicianship, other musicians like to work with John because of his professionalism and personality. Chris Hillman describes John as "the best musician I have ever worked with." Roger McGuinn says, "I've had a lot of great times with John, but my favorite memory is of the time he and Stan Lynch were recording with me for the Byrds Boxed Set in Nashville. John played bass that night. The groove we got was incredible! We all just looked at each other and smiled.—John was truly a Byrd!"

Travis Tritt has said, "John is not only one of my favorite musicians but also one of the nicest people in the industry. He has contributed his musicianship to several of my albums as well as some of the most memorable and important live performances I have ever done. He is one of very few musicians who is capable of pulling off performances with the likes of Earl Scruggs as well as Elton John. I appreciate him for his talent, positive attitude, and professionalism."

John is also a talented composer, arranger, and engineer. Tommy Emmanuel says, "JJ is not only a musician of vast experience and knowledge, he is also a powerful composer and arranger. I love his music; it has a depth and freshness that stands out in our world today. It was my great honor, along with my brother Phil, to choose John's song 'Back on Terra Firma' as the piece we wanted to perform in front of the entire world at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. Oh, by the way, did I mention he is one of the greatest musicians I've ever played with? What a Groovehound!!!!"

While the long list of famous musicians with whom John has performed and/or recorded with—as well as the words they use to describe his musicianship—is quite impressive, it still does not truly portray the depth of his talent or experience. We have yet to mention that John has played bass in jazz ensembles, played bassoon and saxophne in classical symphonies, played mandolin and guitar in a bluegrass band, played electric guitar in a new wave band, played upright bass in a rockabilly band, and played clarinet and soprano sax in a Dixieland jazz band. In order to add those details to John's story, it is best that we go back and start at the beginning.

The Son of Musicians

John Jorgenson was born in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1956. His mother was a piano teacher and his father an orchestra conductor and college music professor. The Jorgenson family moved to Redlands, California, before John's first birthday. His father took a job as a professor of music at the University of Redlands. John's mother continued to teach piano lessons in the Jorgenson home. John says, "Music was always around. A bunch of kids would come over our house everyday and play the piano. So to me, as a kid, it was nothing special. Everybody did it. Every kid that I saw played the piano."

When John's older sister was in first grade, his mother began teaching her piano. John, two and a half years younger, would listen to his sister's lesson and then go up to the piano and begin trying to play the songs that his mother had been teaching his sister. John recalls, "I just wanted to copy what she was doing. My mom, being a smart teacher, went ahead and started my lessons, but in a different book so that I would also learn how to read music. She said that it was obvious that I could already play by ear."

When John was eight his sister began playing the flute in the band at school and John said, "Wait a minute, if she is playing two instruments, then I want to play two instruments." John's father began teaching him how to play the clarinet. John said that he chose the clarinet because he liked the sound of the instrument in "Peter and the Wolf."

John became interested in the guitar when he first saw the Beatles on television in 1964, but it would be a few more years before he would begin to learn the instrument. When he was ten, one of his classmates brought a ukulele in to school for show-and-tell. The boy played "This Land

John Jorgenson with the Thunder Mountain Breakdown Boys. John performed bluegrass music everyday at Disneyland with this group for nine years. The group is (left to right) Raul Reynoso, Doug Maddocks, John Jorgenson, and Charlie Warren

John performing on the *Nashville Now* television show with Emmy Lou Harris and Rose Maddox. John is playing Lester Flatt's old D-28.

Is Your Land" for the class. John recalls, "At the time I either played the piano, something you couldn't carry around, or I played the clarinet in a band. I thought that what this kid did was pretty cool because it was something you could do on your own. We had a ukulele laying around the house, so I started fooling around with that and pretty quickly wanted a guitar."

Learning to Play Guitar

John's parents were not quick to introduce their son to a new instrument. They felt like a guitar would distract him from learning the piano and clarinet. However, when John began borrowing guitars from some of his neighbors, his parents realized that he was serious about the instrument and bought him his first guitar as a Christmas present when he was 12. His first guitar was a St. George electric, a Japanese copy of the Fender Jaguar. John began learning guitar parts from the songs he heard on the radio. He remembers being especially drawn to the music of the Byrds, Beatles, Rolling Stones, and Creedence Clearwater Revival. He was self-taught on the electric guitar, learning by ear off records.

John's first experience with an acoustic guitar occurred in the summer of his 12th year. The local community college offered beginning and advanced guitar courses and John signed up for the beginner's class. However, he was very disappointed on the first day of class when the instructor told him he could not have an electric guitar in class. John was crushed. Knowing how excited John was to take the course, his parents bought him an acoustic guitar as an early birthday present. His first acoustic was a Yamaha FG-180, Yamaha's D-18 copy.

After classes began, John's instructor realized that John was more advanced than anyone in the beginner's class, so he moved John up to the advanced class. As luck would have it, no one else had showed up for the advanced class, so John received private lessons. John recalls, "The guy who was teaching was really into the blues, so he taught me the blues scale and a little bit about improvisation. That was really helpful at that point."

Almost immediately after learning how to play the guitar, John began getting together with friends and playing in garage bands. Since age ten he had also been playing in classical ensembles at his father's university and in honors bands at his school. By the eighth grade, in addition to the clarinet, he had begun studying the bassoon, and then a few years later added the saxophone. John says, "I was studying all of those instruments, and then playing the guitar on the side for fun." During his high school years a typical weekend for John would consist of playing bassoon with a university classical symphony during the day and then playing with a rock band at a frat party at night.

John's talent on guitar during high school caught the attention of some college-age musicians who invited John to play in their band. John recalls, "That was good because they were a lot better than me and I kind of had to 'step up to the plate.' By that time we were playing material by Cream, Hendrix, The Who, and Deep Purple. I also really liked the band Yes at that time because they kind of bridged my classical music side and my rock side."

John's involvement with various classical symphonies and rock bands continued through his college years. John attended the University of Redlands and earned a B.A. degree in woodwinds performance studying clarinet, bassoon, and saxophone. During his college years John also took some part-time gigs playing in bands at Disneyland. It wasn't until after graduating from college that John discovered bluegrass music and flatpicking.

Discovering Bluegrass

The first summer after graduating from college John was offered a scholarship to play bass in a jazz ensemble at the Aspen Music Festival. John accepted the scholarship with the agreement that they would also allow him to study bassoon. While in Aspen, John saw an ad in the local paper: "Wanted for immediate gigs, acoustic jazz bass player." John said, "I checked out a bass from the music festival and I went down and ended up jamming with these guys. What they were playing, basically, was the music from David Grisman's first album and some other fiddle tunes and stuff. It was a female fiddle player from the festival and a local mandolin player and local guitar player. They were really good and I had never heard that kind of music before. I had heard bluegrass once or twice, and I had liked it, but I didn't know what it was and I didn't know anyone who was into it. I really liked the music and so I played with them that summer and learned some of the fiddle tunes and some of the Grisman things. When I got back to California after that summer I was inspired to learn the mandolin."

When John got back home he borrowed a neighbor's mandolin and began learning a few tunes. At the same time he also began playing electric guitar with a new wave band in LA. Shortly thereafter, in the fall of

1979, a friend who was putting together a band to play both bluegrass and Dixieland jazz at Disneyland asked John if he knew anyone who could play fiddle and trumpet. John said, "No, but I can play mandolin and clarinet." John recalls, "I really couldn't play mandolin very well, but I was learning, and I could play the clarinet, but didn't know anything about Dixieland. But, this was a job."

The Disneyland Gig

John was hired for the job and the first time he got together with the band he realized that the other members where not much further along with bluegrass music than he was. "I bought a cheap Ibenez mandolin and went to rehearse with these guys. The banjo player only knew a few songs on five string banjo, but he could play them well. He was really good on the plectrum banjo, so the Dixieland stuff was fine. The leader of the band, who was really a drummer, could play the washboard for the Dixieland stuff and he could play guitar well enough to accompany the banjo player on 'Dueling Banjos,' 'Foggy Mountain Breakdown,' and 'Blackberry Blossom.' The bass player could play tuba and string bass. It worked out pretty good because we kind of all learned how to play bluegrass together. For Dixieland, they were well ahead of me, but I could learn songs fast and play the melodies. We learned enough for one set of each style of music."

The band began working at Disneyland playing one style of music in the morning, then changing clothes and location and playing another style of music in the afternoon. John says, "As we worked we started learning more material so that we didn't have to play the same set over and over. I really liked playing the mandolin so I started really getting into it and practicing a lot. I was listening to Bill Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs, and Jim and Jesse. I didn't know it at the time, but I was also listening to Sam Bush, Ricky Skaggs, Tony Rice, Clarence White, and Doc Watson."

In addition to learning about bluegrass, John was also obviously learning more about Dixieland jazz. In fact, his introduction to Gypsy jazz and Django Reinhardt came through the Dixieland band. John remembers, "The banjo player that I was working with in the Dixieland band would talk with reverence about Django Reinhardt. So I thought that I ought to check it out and I bought an album that turned out to not be a very good introduction to Django, so it put me off for a while. A while later I bought another one and it was all of the classic Hot Club stuff. I loved it and just went crazy for it."

John became so involved in Gypsy jazz music that in about 1982 he convinced the members of the Disneyland band to form a third entity of the band and perform that music. Right around that same time the original leader of the band left to join another show as a comic. His replacement was Raul Reynoso. Raul was a talented flatpicker who had played with Larry McNeely and also loved Gypsy jazz. The third version of the Disneyland band was called the Rhythm Brothers. When asked about Disney's reaction to the new band, John said, "Management really liked the band because we were good musically and we were entertaining. They were happy with us, so they allowed us to do it to just humor us. But also it gave them another area. We had the 30s kind of clothes so that we could play in the New Orleans location. We did a combination of Hot Club instrumentals with vocals from the Boswell Sisters, Nat King Cole Trio and stuff like that." After adding the third entity, the band had to now change clothes and locations two times and began playing eight sets at Disneyland every day.

When John first started learning how to play Gypsy jazz he was learning on an Epiphone archtop. John recalls, "It was really brutal. It had no sustain and it was really hard. When Raul joined the band, he already had a Selmer. He brought it in and I said, 'Wow, I want to play that!' " John eventually got a 1942 Selmer to play with the Rhythm Brothers. The interesting story behind his acquisition of this guitar is told in the sidebar on page 12.

After Raul joined the band at Disneyland, John also started playing more flatpicking style guitar. Raul enjoyed playing the mandolin, so when the band performed bluegrass John and Raul would swap off on mandolin and guitar. John continued to play the gig at Disneyland for about six more years. While still working at Disney, in 1986, John recorded his album *After You've Gone*. On the first side John played Django-style Gypsy jazz guitar, with David Grisman on mandolin and Darol Anger on violin. On the other side he played Benny Goodman-style music on electric guitar and clarinet. The album was released in 1988. Regarding the recording, John said, "I did that album just as the Desert Rose Band was starting to go. I could tell that I probably wasn't going to be playing that kind of music steadily again in the near future. I felt like I had achieved a level of chops on both clarinet and guitar that I wanted to do a record at that time."

John Jorgenson with the Rhythm Brothers. The group performed Gypsy jazz music daily at Disneyland from 1982 through 1988. From right to left: Doug Maddocks, John Jorgenson, Charlie Warren, and Raul Reynoso

Photo: Peter Figen

The Desert Rose Band in 1988: Jay Dee Maness, Herb Pedersen, Bill Bryson, Chris Hillman, Steve Duncan, and John Jorgenson

The Desert Rose Band

As if eight sets a day with the band at Disneyland was not enough, John continued to play music at night with a variety of different bands during the years he worked at Disney. John left the new wave band after a few years because he became tired of the LA club scene. He said, "I quit playing the electric guitar for a while because I wanted to concentrate on mandolin, Gypsy jazz, and flatpicking." In 1983 he joined a rockabilly trio playing upright bass with his friend Jeff Ross on guitar. A short time later, in 1984, he also started a country band called the Cheatin' Hearts. Bill Bryson was in the band and, at the time, Bill was also playing with Chris Hillman, Bernie Leadon, and Al Perkins in an acoustic gospel quartet. When Bernie left the band John joined them. The band played together as the Chris Hillman Band for about six months. Eventually, in 1985, Herb Pedersen came in to replace Al Perkins and John brought in the rhythm section from the Cheatin' Hearts to form a new group called the Desert Rose Band. The Grammy-nominated Desert Rose Band went on to record five number one singles. John stayed with the Desert Rose Band until 1991.

Work with the Desert Rose Band brought John national recognition and would lead to numerous future opportunities. Up-and-coming country artists like Lyle Lovett and Mary Chapin Carpenter opened shows for the Desert Rose Band and would later use John on their recordings. John's work with the Desert Rose Band also caught the attention of rock legend Elton John. John explains, "Chris Hillman's wife, Connie, worked for Elton's management company for a long time, so Elton knows Chris. Elton knows everything about music history. He is really into it. So obviously he knew Chris. Connie gave Elton a copy of the Desert Rose Band's first album and he loved it. We were doing a gig at the Roxy in 1988 to promote our second album. Lyle Lovett was the opening act and in the audience was Bruce Hornsby, Dave Edmunds, Nicolette Larson, Stephen Stills, Bernie Taupin, Rose Maddox, and Elton John. I had met Elton just briefly before the show, but I didn't have anything to say to him because he was a star and I was just a guitar player. We did the show and it went really well. After the show we were in the dressing room and I was standing by the door. Elton burst into the dressing room grabbed my hand and said, "Brilliant guitar, f***ing brilliant!" I was shocked. After that, I went to see him a couple of times when he played LA. Because of Connie Hillman we would get nice tickets and a back stage pass. The first time I went back stage at a show, there were all of these celebrities, Sylvester Stallone was there with Brigitte Nielsen, and when Elton came out he said, 'How are you doing John? How's the music?' I was kind of impressed that he remembered my name and I thought, 'OK, I've entered into his long term memory.' I'd become friends with Elton's guitar player Davey Johnstone and at the time I was starting to do a lot of session work. I'd played on Bonnie Raitt's *Nick of Time* and I had worked with producer Don Was. Don was producing a couple of Elton's cuts on a box set and so I thought maybe I'd get a chance to work on one of Elton's recordings. I even got a call about it, but it never happened." Eventually something would happen with Elton, but before that was to happen John, Jerry Donahue, and Will Ray formed a band called the Hellecasters.

The Hellecasters

John and guitar player Jerry Donahue had been introduced to each other through a mutual friend and had become "guitar buddies." Will Ray, the third member of the Hellecasters, was producing a compilation album of southern California country artists called *Hollywood Roundup* and thought that it would be interesting to have an instrumental number on the recording featuring some of the local LA guitar players. Will brought in John Jorgenson, Jerry Donahue, Billy Gremner, and Jeff Ross to play on the cut. The recording came out so well that Will and Jerry had the idea that they should try and do a live show at the Palomino Club's Tuesday night Barndance. They thought five guitar players would be too many for a live show, so they asked John to come in to do some tunes with them as a guitar trio. John said, "The idea was to play songs, not to just get up there and chicken pick and jam the blues and stuff." John came up with the name "Hellecasters" and the plan was to only do that one show for fun and that would be it.

The show went over so well that people continually asked John, Jerry, and Will "when are you going to do that again." Because they were all busy with other bands, they did not get together to perform again for about six months. They did a few more sporadic performances and it was at one of these gigs that Michael Nesmith, of Monkees fame, showed up. Michael really liked the show and asked the Hellecasters to record an album for his label. The band ended up recording three CDs and a music video. John continued to perform with the band off and on until 2001.

After leaving the Desert Rose Band in 1991, John had a lot of offers to play with

other bands, fielding calls from Lyle Lovett, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Patty Loveless, and Wynonna Judd (to name a few). He had also received calls, at separate times, from producer Howie Epstein to audition for Bruce Springstein and Bob Dylan. John says, "I had left the Desert Rose Band because I wasn't happy with the music anymore and I wanted to go more progressive and I wanted to write and sing more. So, to me, going to be a sideman for somebody else was a step backwards artistically." After leaving Desert Rose, John had performed a few times with the Hellecasters, but mostly he was working on his own material in preparation for a solo recording.

Elton Calls

Although he had turned down many offers to be a sideman, and he was determined to start out on his own, John received a call that was almost impossible to turn down. He explains, "I was talking to my wife on the phone and I got a call waiting call on the other line. She hates call waiting, but I said, 'I better see who this is.' I answered the other line and the voice said, 'Hello John, it's Elton.' I thought 'What!' It sounded like a skyphone, like he was calling from a plane, it was really noisy. I said, 'Elton, where are you? Are you in a plane?' He said, "No dear, I'm in a car coming from the studio. Davey and I were talking and we want to add a guitarist to the band who could do lots of harmony vocals and you were the first person we thought of.' I said, 'I'm really flattered. What is it you want me to do.' Elton said, 'An eighteen-month world tour.' I said, 'Eighteen months! That's a really long time. I'm really honored and really flattered, but can we have a meeting and talk about this.' He said, 'Yes dear, come to the Four Seasons Sunday at one for lunch and you'll have to ask for Binky Poodleclip.' "

John continues, "I went and had a meeting with them and I told his production manager, 'I don't know. The second Hellecasters album is about to come out and I'm about to do my own album too. What is the time going to be like. Am I going to be able to keep doing these other things.' He said, 'Oh, no. You won't be able to do anything else.' I said, 'This is a great opportunity, but I don't know if I want to drop everything I am doing. It is such a big left turn for me.' Elton said, 'Well, it sounds like you might be too busy to take this gig, but let me play you my new album.' So of course he has a killer sound system in this luxurious hotel suite and he puts on this album, which was *Made In England*. The first song is a song called 'Believe.' This was back to really classic British pop music. It was really a return to form for Elton John and it was the type of Elton John music that I like. There was a lot more guitar, it wasn't so synth-oriented and as each song went along I thought, 'That one's good. I like that.' We had lunch and by the end of the day I was thinking, 'I really do like this music.' But still after that I thought about it for a week. Every couple of days they were calling and saying, 'We really need to know.' The last call was, 'I appreciate that you need to think about this, but I really need to know because if you aren't going to do this I need to call some other people.' I thought, 'No one else is getting this gig. This is my gig.' So I called them and told them I wanted to do it." The eighteen-month world tour turned into six years with Elton John. John received the first call from Elton in September of 1994. He stayed as a member of Elton John's band through 2001.

John Jorgenson and Friends

Currently, in addition to session work in Nashville, John performs with his own band, John Jorgenson and Friends. He also plays electric guitar and mandolin in Earl Scruggs' band. Once a month he also plays at the Station Inn with the Hot Club of Nashville. The Hot Club band grew out of a series of parties that photographer Jim McGuire had held at his studio. The Hot Club of Nashville consists of John Jorgenson, Bryan Sutton, Stuart Duncan, Richard Smith, and Charlie Chadwick. When asked if this band is going to record, John said, "It is supposed to be just a fun thing for us to get together once a month and play live, but usually those things end up turning into something else. My view on recording is that it is a little bit premature right now to make a record because we don't have an album's worth of material that is either original arrangement or original composition. There is some incredible playing and some brilliant moments in our live shows, but to me, with the guys in Europe putting out killer albums of this style music, I don't see any point of doing something that is going to be less than killer. To me, material is the big deal. We have heard everyone from Django onwards do 'Nuages' and 'Minor Swing' and all of those. Why do we want to hear a bunch of Americans doing that? With some originality in the composition recording with that band would be great and I have a feeling that it will naturally happen somewhere down the road."

With his own band, John's show includes a little bit of all the music that has influenced him. He says, "I usually carry four guitars with me. I have a Tele-style, a Strat-style, a six-string flattop and a 12-string acoustic.

Photo: Gayle Ray

The Hellecasters: John Jorgenson, Will Ray, and Jerry Donahue

In 1990 John toured and recorded with the Byrds, shown here at the Ventura Theater. From left to right: Chris Hillman, Steve Duncan, Roger McGuinn, David Crosby, John Jorgenson.

Ideally I would have a Selmer too, but my signature Takamine has a preamp where you can store different settings and EQ. I have messed with it so that it has a character more like a Selmer. I start my set with an instrumental that is going to rock Hellecaster-like. Then I will do a rock song that I sing, then a Desert Rose Band song, a Byrds song, and then I might break it down and do two or three Gypsy style things and then a bluegrass flatpicking song or two. Then I might do an instrumental with the twelve-string and a fretless bass and then I'll go back to the Strat. It is great for me to be able to do all of that stuff in one show."

John's next project is going to be a Gypsy jazz style recording. He has written most of the material and will play both guitar and clarinet. He has also been recording some new material with his band. Fans of bluegrass music and Gypsy jazz can rest assured that the music they love is in good hands with John Jorgenson. For someone of his stature, experience, and reputation to be out performing acoustic flatpicking and Gypsy jazz songs to audiences who have been drawn to his show because of his work with famous country and rock performers is a great thing for the music. As John said, "A lot of times people don't know that they like a certain style of music until they hear it." With "groovehound"John Jorgenson performing the music, I can't see how the audience cannot help but like it.

The following is a short interview FGM conducted with John regarding the technical aspects of his guitar playing.

How do you play so many different styles and remain true to those styles?

The guitars themselves are different. To me, with a classic bluegrass guitar, I like the strings to be stiff and not have a lot of give to them. I don't bend too much in that style. It needs to be a really full-bodied sound with a good bottom end for the rhythm. For playing Gypsy style, to me, you need a more fluid guitar with strings that have more give to them. I'll use a lighter gauge string because of the way it acts and the way that it responds. On a regular flattop I will use phosphor bronze medium gauge strings, for Gypsy style I will use Argentine silver-plated copper-wound strings that are really flexible. They almost feel like silk and steel. For me, the Gypsy guitar has more midrange voice to it. It doesn't have a really big bottom end or really bright top end. So, for me, when I pick up a certain type of guitar what I want to play on it is the style of music which best suits it. Bluegrass licks don't sound good on a Gypsy style guitar.

So when you get that guitar in your hands, whether it be a Martin, a Selmer, a Tele, or a Strat, your mind goes to the feel and style that the guitar is best suited for?

Yes, there is an identity that goes along with the guitars themselves.

When you have been playing rock and roll for a while and then go back to Gypsy or bluegrass, do you have to spend some time getting your chops back?

Going from the electric to the acoustic it is mostly in the right hand. There is much more power required in the right hand on the acoustic. And with both Gypsy and bluegrass it is also speed and accuracy. You really need to have the coordination between the right and left hands when playing those styles.

Were you flatpicking bluegrass on the guitar before you started playing the Gypsy style?

I was playing mandolin in bluegrass before I became interested in the Hot Club stuff. But it was about the same time that I started learning to play Gypsy style guitar that I also started flatpicking the guitar.

Did you learn the Gypsy style from records?

Yes, and I tried to learn it with two fingers too. It puts you into positions a lot of times where you wouldn't normally be. I don't always stay with the two fingers, but a lot of times I do because it keeps me in that style. Not that I think a hybrid style is not a good thing, but when I am playing a style of music I like to play it as close to that style as possible so it doesn't sound like a "rock guy playing bluegrass" or a "bluegrass guy playing swing." Sometimes when songs get really fast, you may have to jump into stock licks, but I try not to unless it is an emergency.

You know, I really like it all. I like Jimi Hendrix. When you are playing him, you've got to get all of his characteristic stuff. If you are playing Doc Watson, you get his stuff. And I like it all.

How do you think that Django's music has influenced bluegrass players and flatpicking?

I kind of look at David Grisman as the "Godfather" of the more progressive acoustic music. Obviously, he was heavily influenced by the Quintet of the Hot Club of France. Out of that comes everybody—Tony Rice, Mark O'Connor, Mike Marshall, Darol Anger, Rob Wasserman—then they branch out and it goes on and on.

When you started playing bluegrass guitar did you import things from the mandolin, or did you start listening to bluegrass guitar players to get ideas?

I listened to the guitar players too. If you are listening to Sam Bush and Tony Rice is right next to him on the guitar, you will hear it. I listened to Clarence White the most. But I also listened to Tony Rice and Doc Watson.

A lot of times I would try to play what I was playing on the mandolin on the guitar. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. The good part of that was that I would actually learn the melodies to the fiddle tunes on the mandolin and then put them on the guitar as opposed to copying someone else's arrangement or playing a "guitared out" version of something.

Were you influenced by Clarence White's electric guitar playing?

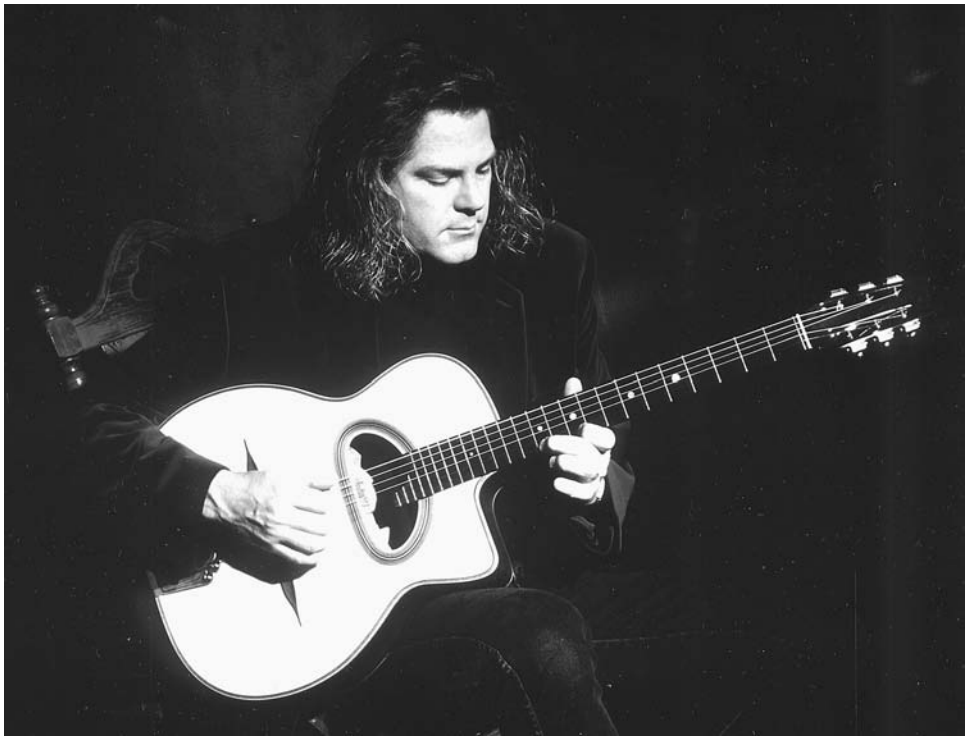
You know, strangely enough, not really. It is strange being in the lineage of the Byrds and Burrito Brothers and that whole thing and then really liking his acoustic playing, but I never got into the whole bender thing very much. There is great stuff you can do with a bender and obviously I heard him, but it wasn't a big influence. On the electric guitar, in terms of straight country playing, I was influenced more by Albert Lee and James Burton and the rockabilly guys like Scotty Moore and Eddie Cochran. I think I came to country more as a combination of rock and bluegrass. I started out as a rock player, then became a bluegrass musician and then went to country after that.

The Desert Rose Band was more like a rock and bluegrass combination wasn't it?

Yes, that was my vision in starting the band: half Pretenders, half Bill Monroe. It was not like country rock was a new phenomenon at all, but as opposed to a rock band liking country and playing that, it was different.

John's Acoustic Guitars

In addition to his Selmer (see sidebar on page 12), John Jorgenson has three main acoustic guitars. Two of these, the Selmer copy by Maurice Dupont and the Takamine, are signature models. Regarding the Dupont, John says, "I had played one of Maurice Dupont's guitars in France one year. It was a tenor guitar with a sound chamber and I thought that it sounded really good. I never liked twelve-fret guitars too much, so I asked him to build me a sound chamber D-hole with a fourteen fret neck. He used some bear claw spruce and all the wood is really figured."



John Jorgenson with his signature model Dupont guitar.

John's signature model Takamine (see cover photo) is a mahogany cutaway that he uses when he plugs in. When Takamine approached John, and asked about a signature model, he had already been playing one of their guitars. He asked them to basically build the same guitar, however, he asked that they scallop the braces and use a thinner finish. The guitar also includes a digital preamp with a built-in tuner and reverb as well as an antifeedback device and the ability to store EQ presets. It has an ivoroid pickguard and white tuners. It is available in both 6 and 12-string models. John's initials "JJ" are inlayed in the fretboard.

When John plays bluegrass gigs he uses a guitar that he bought from Raul Reynoso during the days at Disney. Raul had bought this guitar, a Tokai Tony Rice model, in Japan in 1983. John said, "I don't know that it is officially called a Tony Rice model, but in the store in Japan there is a plaque next to the guitar that has Kanji writing on it and it says 'Tony Rice' so obviously it is a copy of that guitar. It has all the exact same appointments: the big soundhole, no fret markings, everything. This was before Santa Cruz came out with theirs. Raul had bought two of them and I kept after him to sell me this one until, in a moment of weakness, he did."

To find out more about John Jorgenson, visit www.johnjorgenson.com.

Jig in D

On the next page we have transcribed John's solo to one of his original tunes "Jig In D." The audio track on the CD companion to this issue was taken from John's solo release *Emotional Savant*.

John Jorgenson's Selmer: Was it Django's Guitar?

John had his first opportunity to play a Selmer in 1982 when Raul Reynoso joined the band at Disneyland. After spending time learning to play Gypsy jazz on an Epiphone archtop, he was anxious to play a guitar like Raul's. A friend, John Reynolds, was in a band called Mood Indigo and occasionally John would get hired to play with the group. John said, "Sometimes Mood Indigo would hire a full big band to back them up and they liked the Hot Club thing with extra rhythm guitar players. So I was playing with them and had borrowed a 12 fret D-hole Selmer from Brad Roth and took that guitar to the rehearsal. John Reynolds told me that he knew where there was one of those guitars for sale. He said that it was at Westwood Music, a well-known music store in LA, and told me that the guitar was not out on display; you had to ask for it."

Photo: Peter Figen

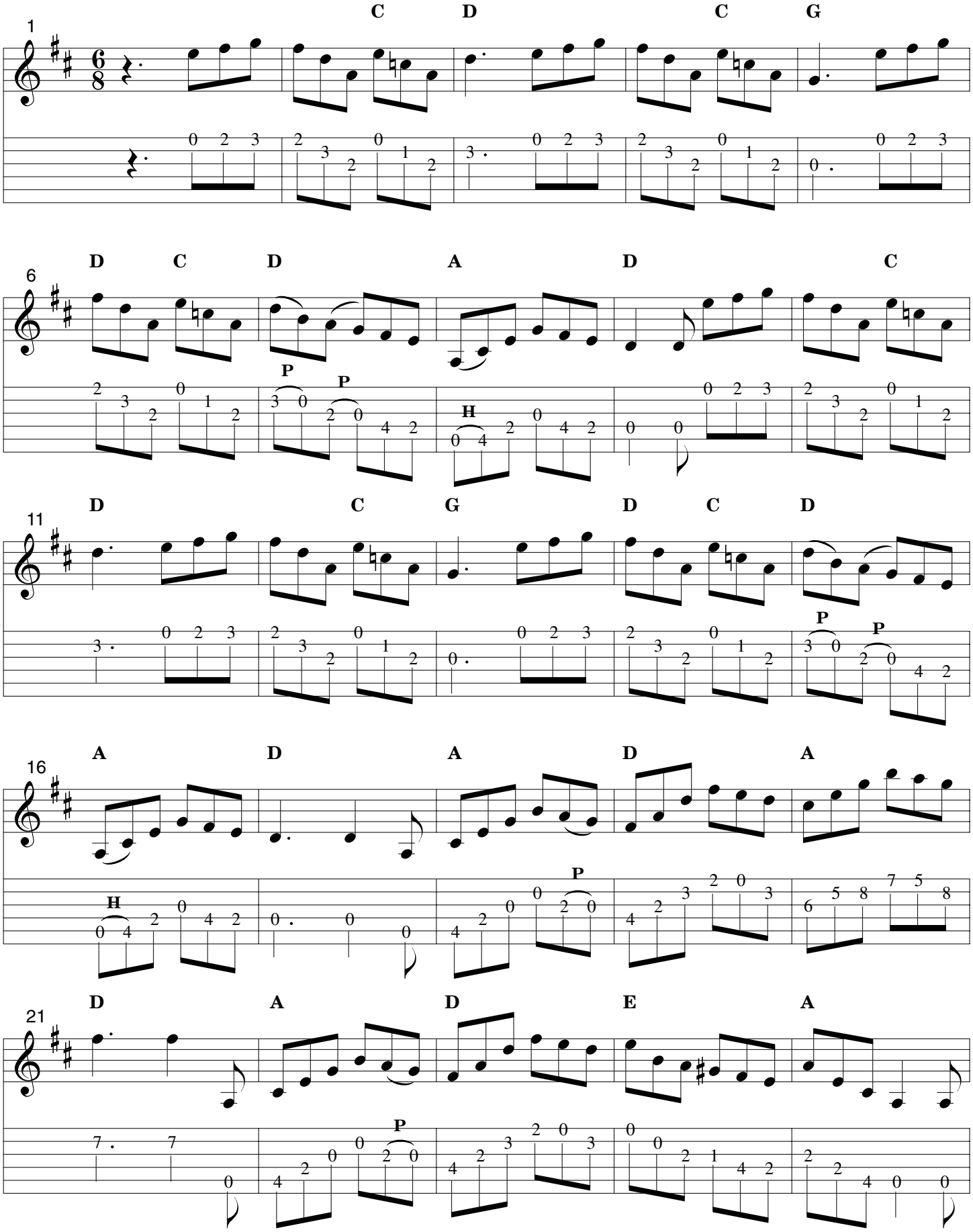
John called Westwood Music on a Friday and asked the store if they could stay open late. Then he went to the credit union during his lunch break and took out a loan. After their last set at Disneyland, John and Raul drove to the music store and asked about the guitar. The guitar was brought out from the back. John remembers his initial reaction, "The only Selmers I had ever seen were Raul's and the 12-fret. This one wasn't quite like Raul's, so I was a little hesitant. They were asking $2500 for it. It had a few splices in the top and the frets were horrible. But, when the case was first opened I notice that Raul was kind of taken aback, but being subtle he didn't say anything. I tried the guitar and went back and forth. They came down to $2100 and I figured I might as well get it because I had never seen another one for sale."

When John and Raul left the store with the guitar, John asked Raul about the reaction he had when the case was first opened. John said, "I thought that he was looking at the cracks or something like that. He said, 'Well, I wasn't going to say anything, but the pick wear on it looks exactly like every one of Django's guitars that I've seen in pictures.' Raul is the type that notices the really small details like that. I didn't think much of it at the time except that the guys that sold the guitar to us were not the owners of the store and they had told us that the owner was going to be back at the store on Tuesday and wanted me to call him because there was some kind of story behind the guitar."

The next Tuesday, John called Fred Wallecki, the store owner. Fred told him that the guitar had been at the store for 12 years. About 1970 a guy with a French accent, whose name was Moustache, had called him and said that he had a guitar that Django Reinhardt had given to him. Moustache wanted $1200 for the guitar so that he could buy a camera. Fred, who thought the caller may have been one of his friends playing a joke on him, told the caller to bring the guitar in. The next day this French guy with a big black bushy mustache came into the store with this guitar. He said that he was a jazz drummer in France and had hung out with Django the last couple of years of his life. Moustache said Django had given him this guitar in lieu of some money Django had owed him. Fred bought the guitar for $1200 and never heard from the Frenchman again. After hearing the story, John thought, "Well, that is a nice story, but who knows? There are a lot of Strats out there that people say Hendrix owned, so it is hard to say."

Years later, John had an interview with a French magazine and they asked him about the guitar. John told the interviewer the story. A short time later, the interviewer in France wrote to John and told him that he had done some research into John's guitar story. The interviewer told John that in addition to being a drummer Moustache was a film personality as well and had been friendly with Django Reinhardt. The interviewer told John that it is very likely that his guitar might have been one of Django's guitars. John says, "There is no way to verify that, but it is just a cool story."

Jig in D

Written by John Jorgenson
Transcribed by Brad Davis

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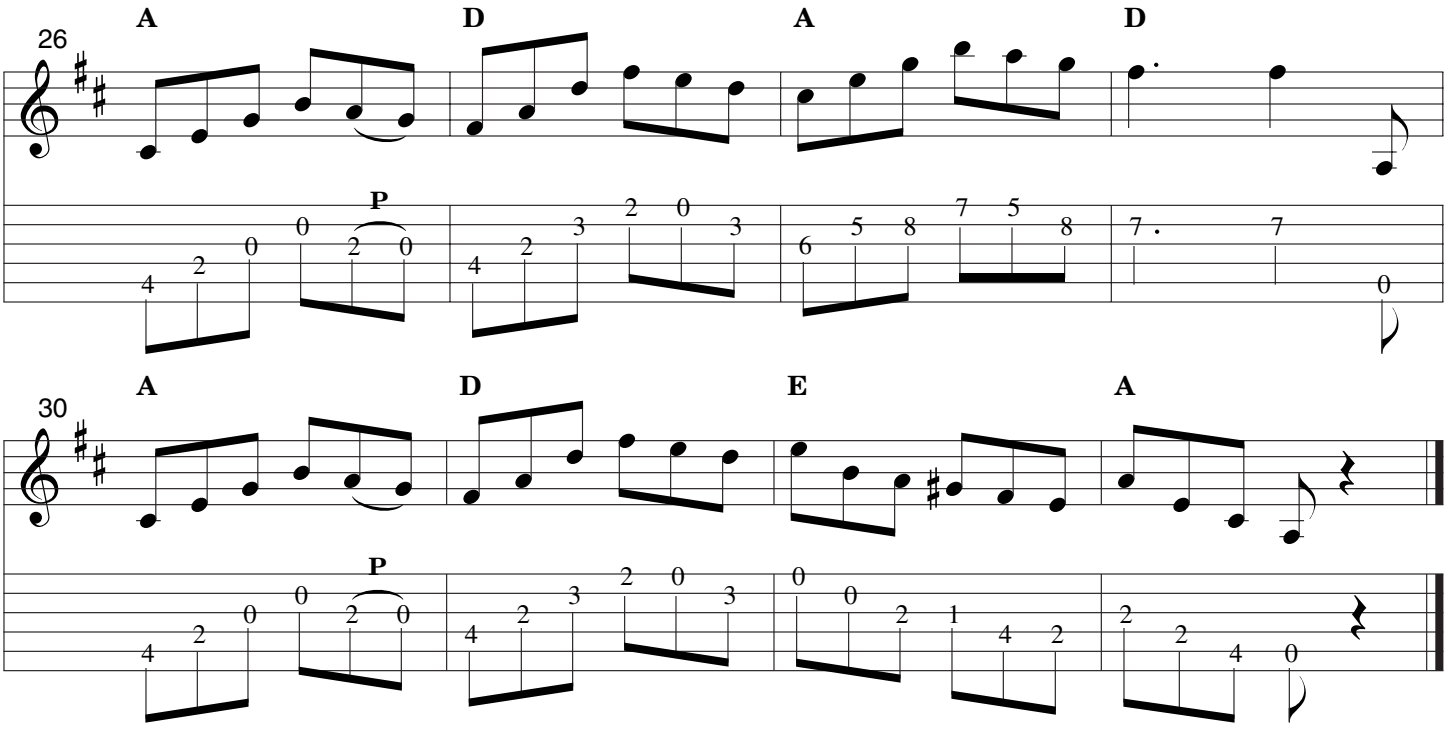

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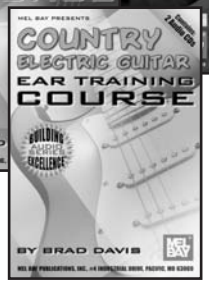

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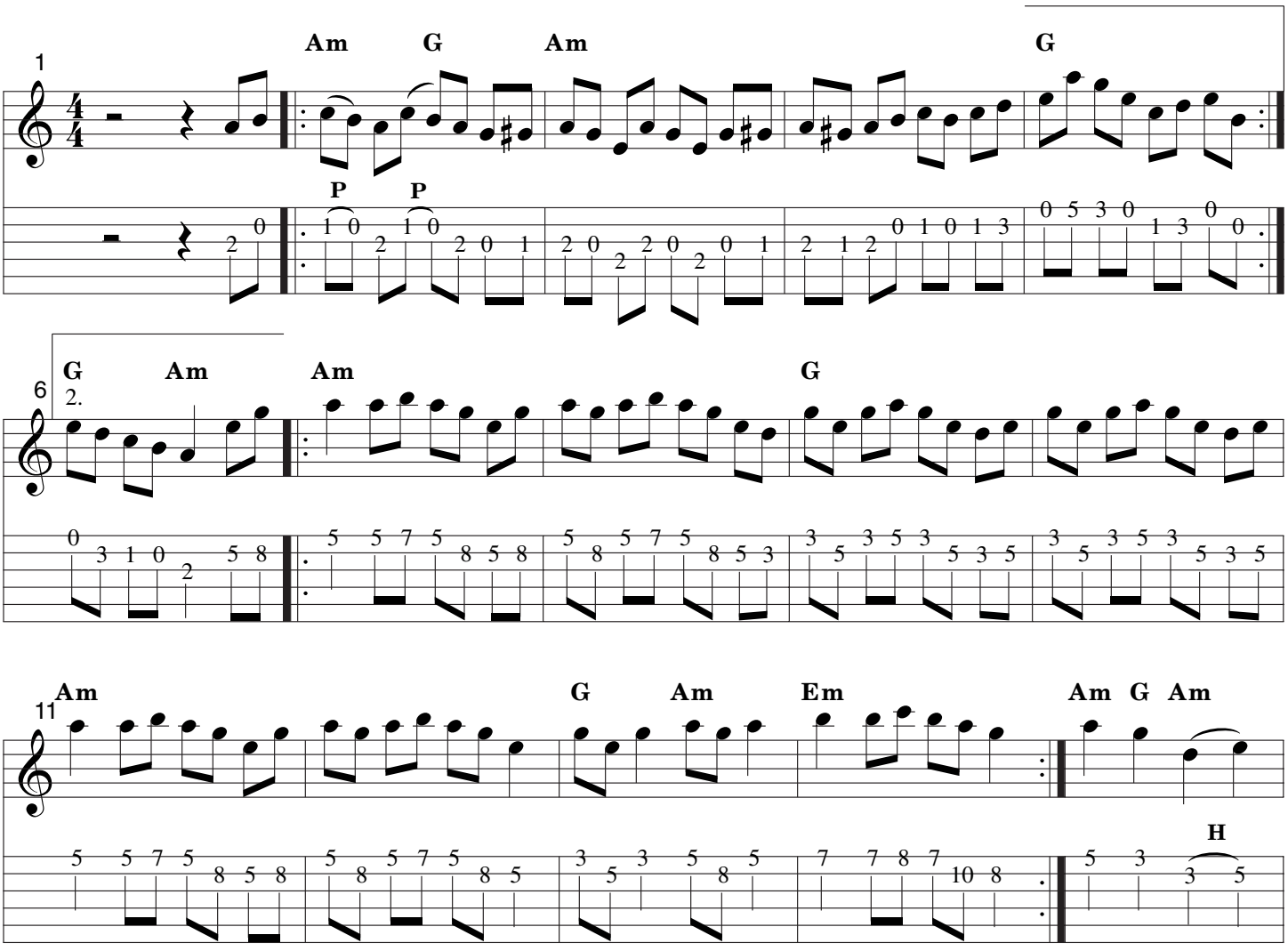
Star of Munster

by Craig Vance

Here's a fun little tune that comes to us through Celtic origin. This is not the purist traditional version. I have applied a few different chord changes to the melody line in the B part to create a different motion. Standard versions simply use the Am and G, and since Em is the relative minor of G, I used it to end the phrase, lending a little more mystique to the tune.

A couple years back when my band was in Ireland we stopped into a pub to hear a session that was taking place. I recall hearing this tune and asking our fiddle player, Sara, what it was called. When she told me it was called "The Star of Munster," I thought it was a tune that I should definitely learn. We have recently tagged this tune onto another song that we keep in our repertoire, and Sara plays a fiery version of it on our upcoming CD. I did some research on the origin of the song title, but found nothing meaty enough to hand over here. I can only surmise that the "Star of Munster" would be something like the best racehorse in Ireland's County of Munster. Or perhaps the king of good cheese! Enjoy the simple flowing melody of this one at a reasonable pace. This is supposed to be played a bit lazily and not at breakdown proportions.

Star of Munster

Arranged by Craig Vance

Beginner's Page

by Dan Huckabee

In the past, I've generally geared the "Beginner's Corner" to the "advancing" beginner. My assumption has always been that if you've become acquainted with *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*, you've probably already been playing for a while and have also been around the music scene a little.

In this issue I'm going to teach you the "head," along with a few variations, of the greatest fiddle tune of all time, "Sally Goodin." You may be thinking, "Whoa! You've already lost me! What's a head?" Oops, sorry. The term "head" was coined by the jazz music folks. It refers to the "normal melody" of a song. When a bunch of jazz musicians get together (very similar to bluegrass), the first soloist plays a round of the tune in a fairly simple and normal way. But each subsequent soloist plays a much wilder take-off that is quite experimental, fits the chord progression, but doesn't sound much like the actual melody of the song. (At this point, restating the melody is considered unnecessary because the first soloist already did that). After everyone has had a turn or two at a wildly improvised solo full of strings of hot licks, the player who started the song plays another "head" to end it. When he comes back in with the obvious normal melody, everyone knows that this is the last time around. Somewhere in the middle, the "melody guy" gets his turn to take a wild hot lick solo too.

What's different about a typical bluegrass session would be that everyone usually states the melody in the first half of their round and usually plays hot licks in the second half. Or maybe each player builds hot licks around the melody, keeping the melody recognizable throughout his round.

Then there's "Sally Goodin." This tune is representative of another entirely different concept in music performance and get-togethers. You might call it bluegrass music's "Grateful Dead" format. If you don't already know, the Grateful Dead were famous for extended jams consisting of solos that seemed to go on forever. One guy might play his solo for round after round and maybe keep playing for as long as a half-hour before relinquishing the spotlight to the next player. For bluegrass, "Sally Goodin" has evolved to be the tune where each player gets a chance to stretch out and play as many variations as he cares to before passing it off to the next soloist. I say "evolve" because "Sally Goodin" was (before anything else) a contest tune. Of course in a fiddle contest, you must play several variations of a tune in order to show the judges a wide range of ability. As contest fiddling grew, so did the variations on "Sally Goodin."

As you can guess, the next stage of evolution was guitar players stealing "Sally" from fiddle players and adopting it as a guitar contest standard. I'm going to teach you the head plus a few variations. In doing so, you will learn a "four-potatoes" intro and you will have several variations of "Sally Goodin" under your belt.

Even if you are a beginner, this is a good time to suggest that good guitar solo ideas don't just come from other guitars. If you are starting to venture into figuring out licks from recordings, "Sally Goodin" is a good tune for getting your feet wet. You can listen to the fiddle on your favorite CD containing "Sally Goodin," and try to learn the notes that the fiddle played. Just because it was played on the fiddle doesn't necessarily mean that it can't be played on the guitar. Keep in mind that some fiddle licks will fit the guitar better than others, but that's the value of experimenting.

The following break of "Sally" is from my CD/book combo *Bluegrass Guitar the Right Way is the Easy Way, Volume 2*. In this lesson I teach five variations of "Sally Goodin," plus a tag ending! There are also nine other songs in the whole course. If you are interested in this material or any other flatpicking materials you can give us a call toll free at: 800-543-6125 or check our website at www.musicians-workshop.com.

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Sally Goodin

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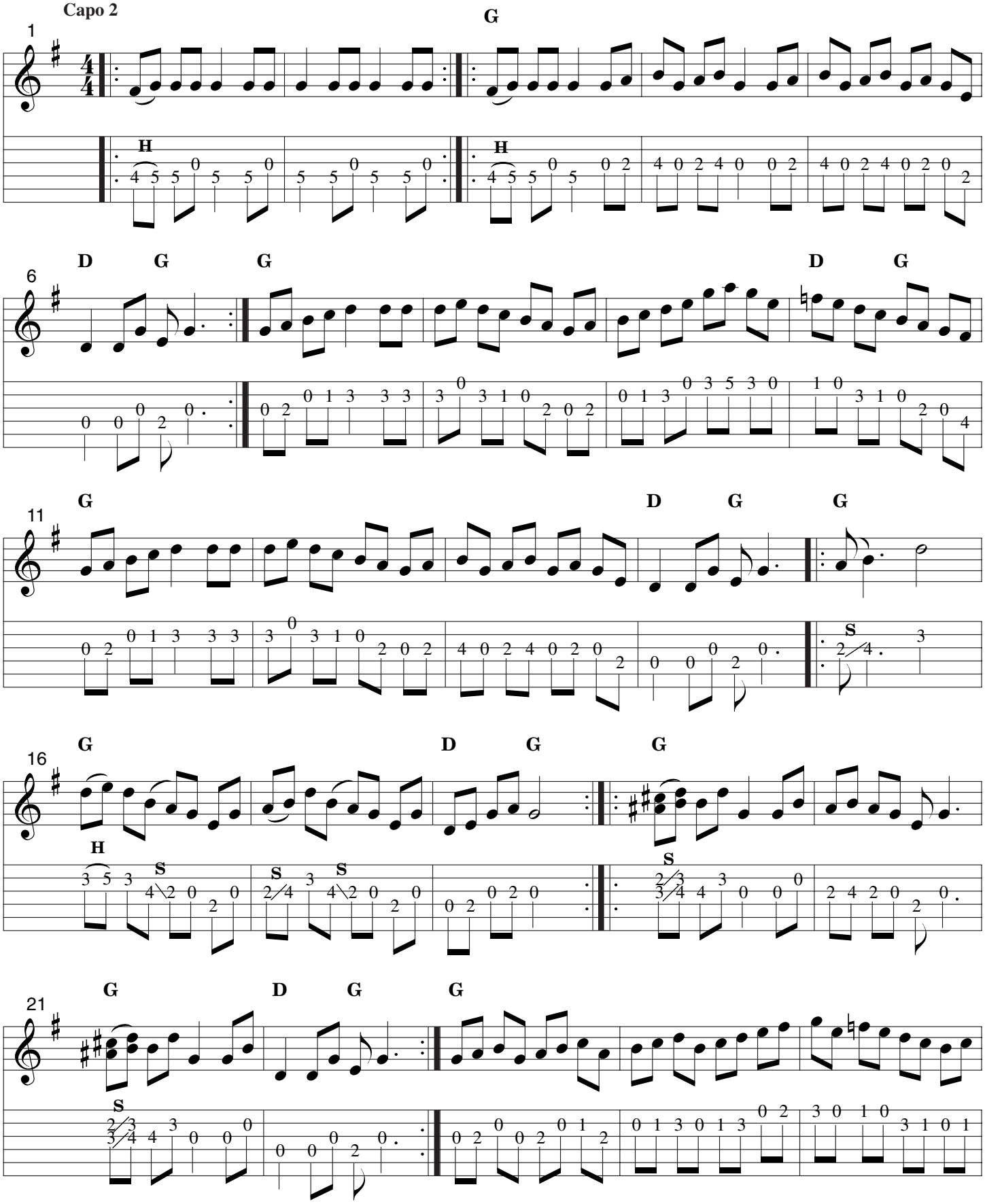
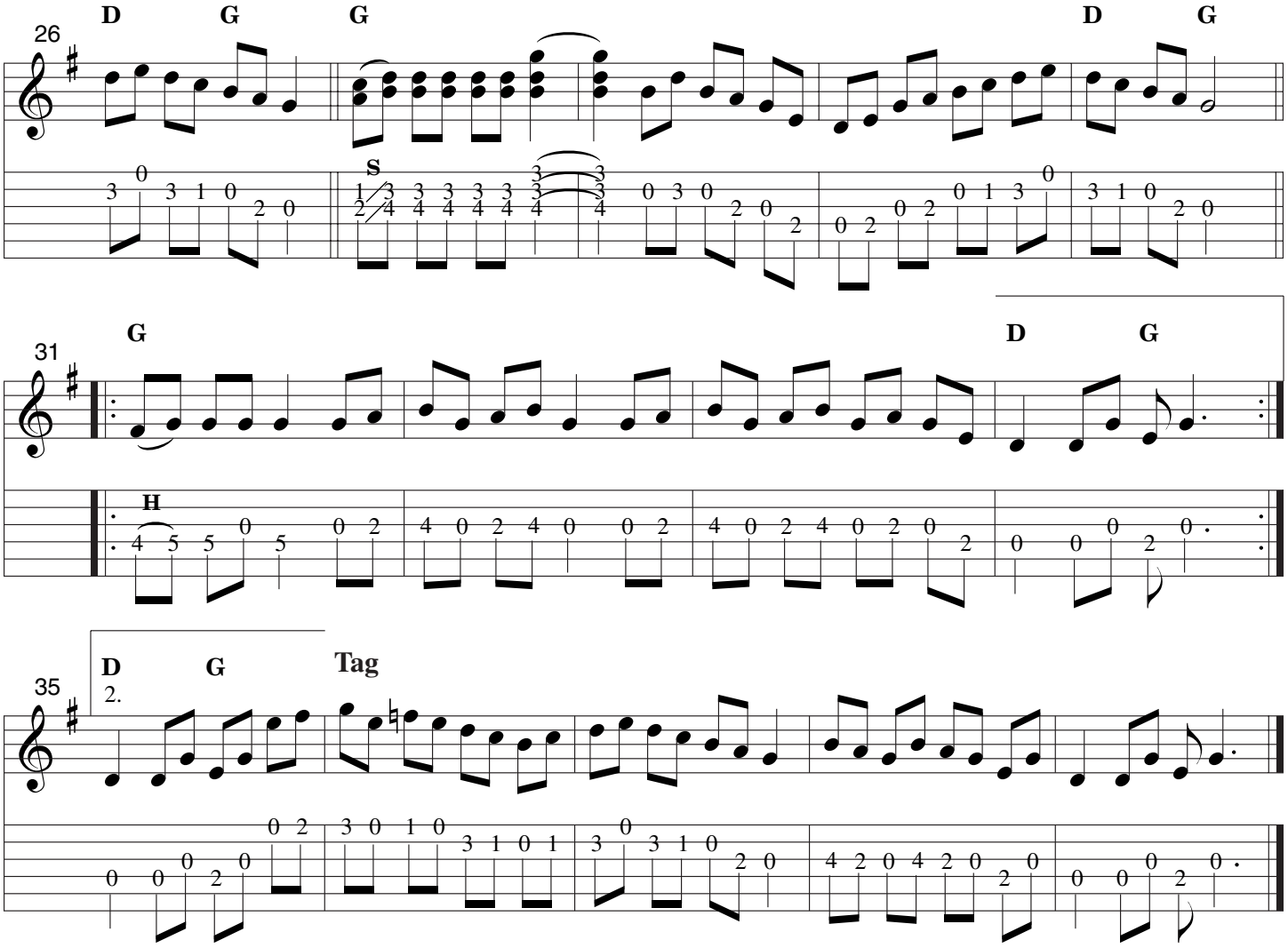

Sally Goodin (con't)

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Additionally, Wyatt is shown improvisationally accompanying various instruments (banjo, fiddle, guitar, mandolin) and then analyzing what he has done to provide the rhythmic foundation behind each instrument. Also featured are guest appearances by: Rickie Simpkins on fiddle (Sally Goodin' and Dusty Miller) and mandolin (Big Country and I Wonder Where You Are Tonight), Sammy Shelor on banjo (Ground Speed and Whitewater), Kenny Smith on guitar (Goodbye, Liza Jane and Bill Cheathum) and Tony Rice (Waltz for Indira, Manzanita, and Devlin). Wyatt provides guitar accompaniment to each of these artists and then analyzes the techniques he has employed.

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Flatpick Rhythm Guitar

by Joe Carr

Your Friend the Key of A

This column is for all you bluegrassers out there who play rhythm in G position no matter what key you are in. You know who I'm talking about: second fret capo = A, fourth fret = B, fifth fret = C, and so on. Let me be clear, G is great for some tunes and there's nothing better than a good driving bluegrass tune in G capped off with a G run! But I'd like to discuss some options in the next few columns to help you break out of the G trap (if you are stuck).

For our first option, we will explore the key of A (without a capo). Open A is a great key for the guitar. You just need some licks and bass runs to move easily between A, D and E chords. Once you get comfortable in A, you might try a B tune capoed at the second fret and played in A! Or Bb at the first fret. Or C at the third.

The standard open A chord (ex. 1) uses the open first string E (the fifth of the A chord) as the highest note in the chord. The "Long A" chord (ex. 2) puts the fifth fret A note on top (usually with your little finger) with the rest of the chord played with a first finger barre. The voicing of this chord is similar to the open G voicing we are used to, so we often prefer it in bluegrass. This "Long A" form was used by lots old timers at festivals when I was first getting into the music back in the 70s. I always thought of it as the "Mac Wiseman A."

The open A, D and E strings make open A a great position on guitar. With a little work, you may soon like it as well as G. Try playing rhythm to "Red Haired Boy," "Salt Creek," "Gold Rush," "Sally Goodin," "Dusty Miller" and others in open A.

Another advantage to this approach is that you don't have to hassle with the capo and any retuning. Many guitarists adjust their tuning while they are capoed only to have to re-re-tune once they remove the capo. This activity can result in a floating tuning as the band constantly readjusts to each other's adjustments. If the guitarist never touches his tuning, the band can always turn to the guitar for standard notes. (Of course. if everyone is using a tuner, the problems are largely solved.)

Performance notes: The progression below fits a song like "Your Love is Like a Flower." The number chart is:

1 1 4 4
1 1 5 5
1 1 4 4
1 5 1 1

In future columns, we will look at open E, C and D progressions. Good luck!

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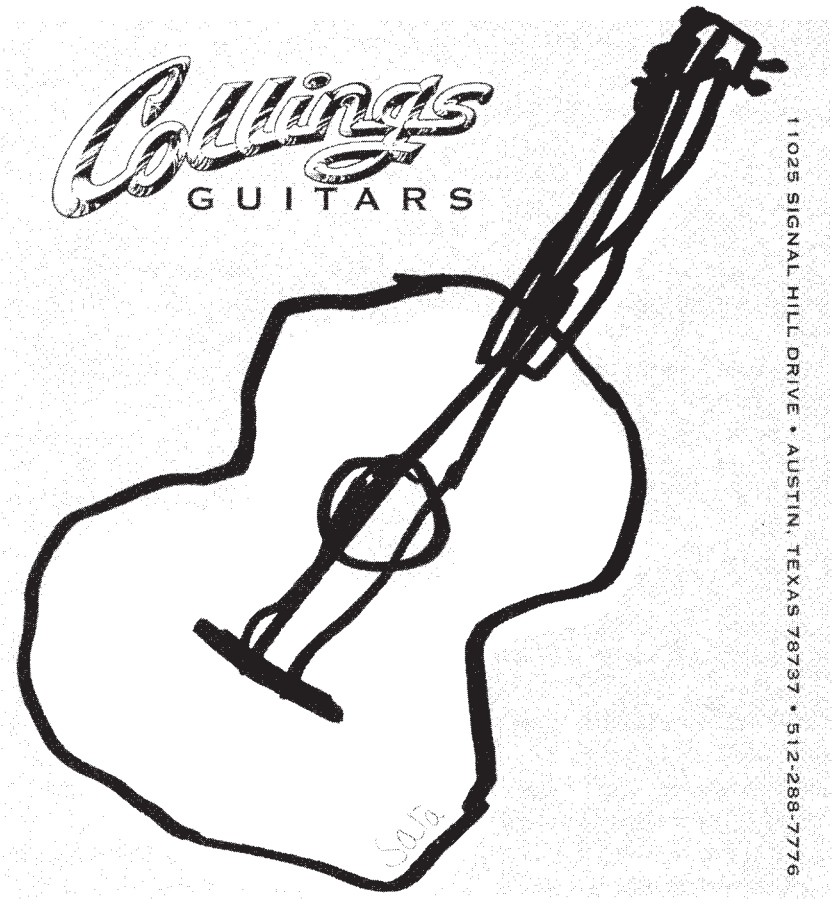

Key of A Rhythm Progression

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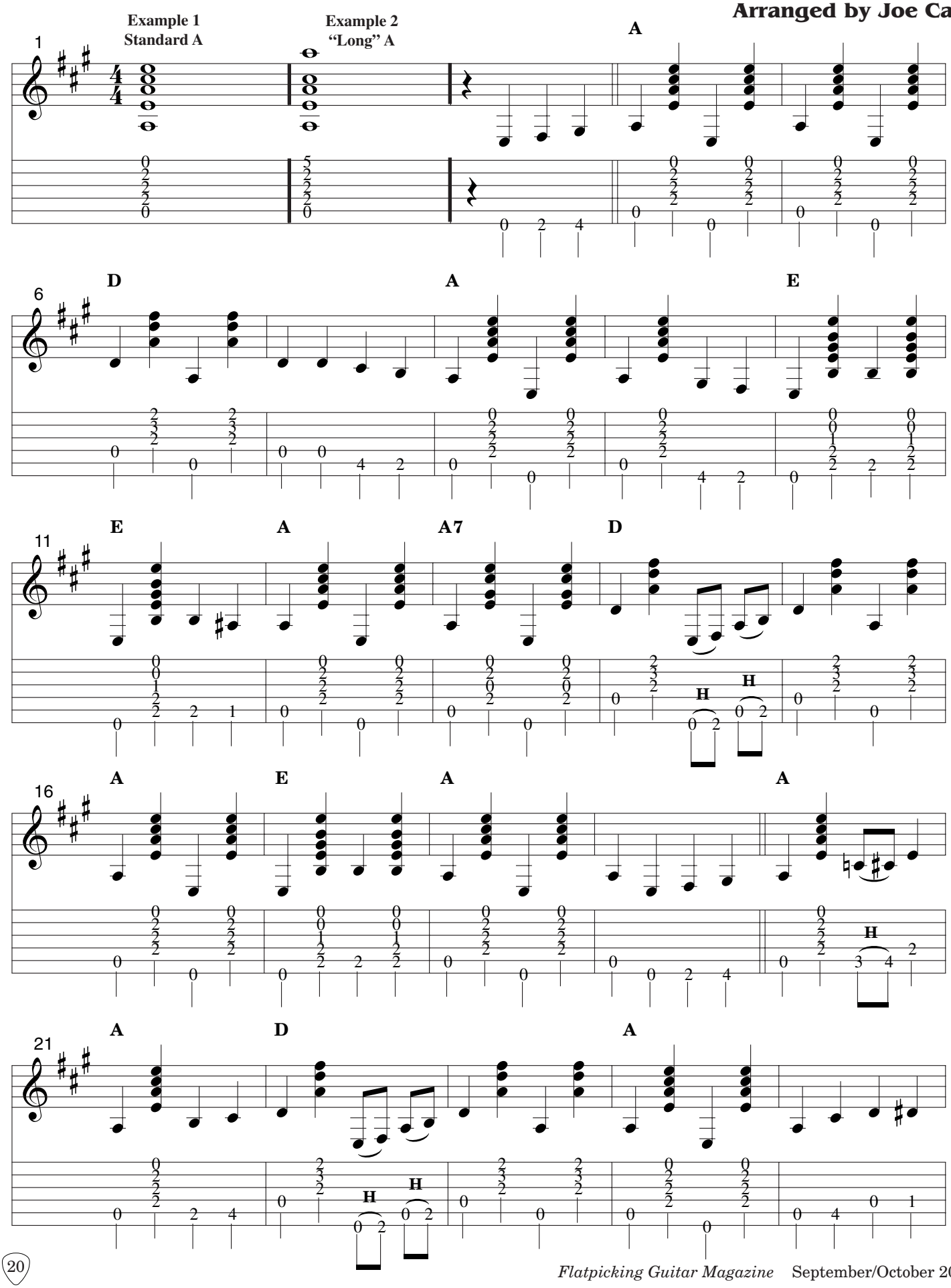
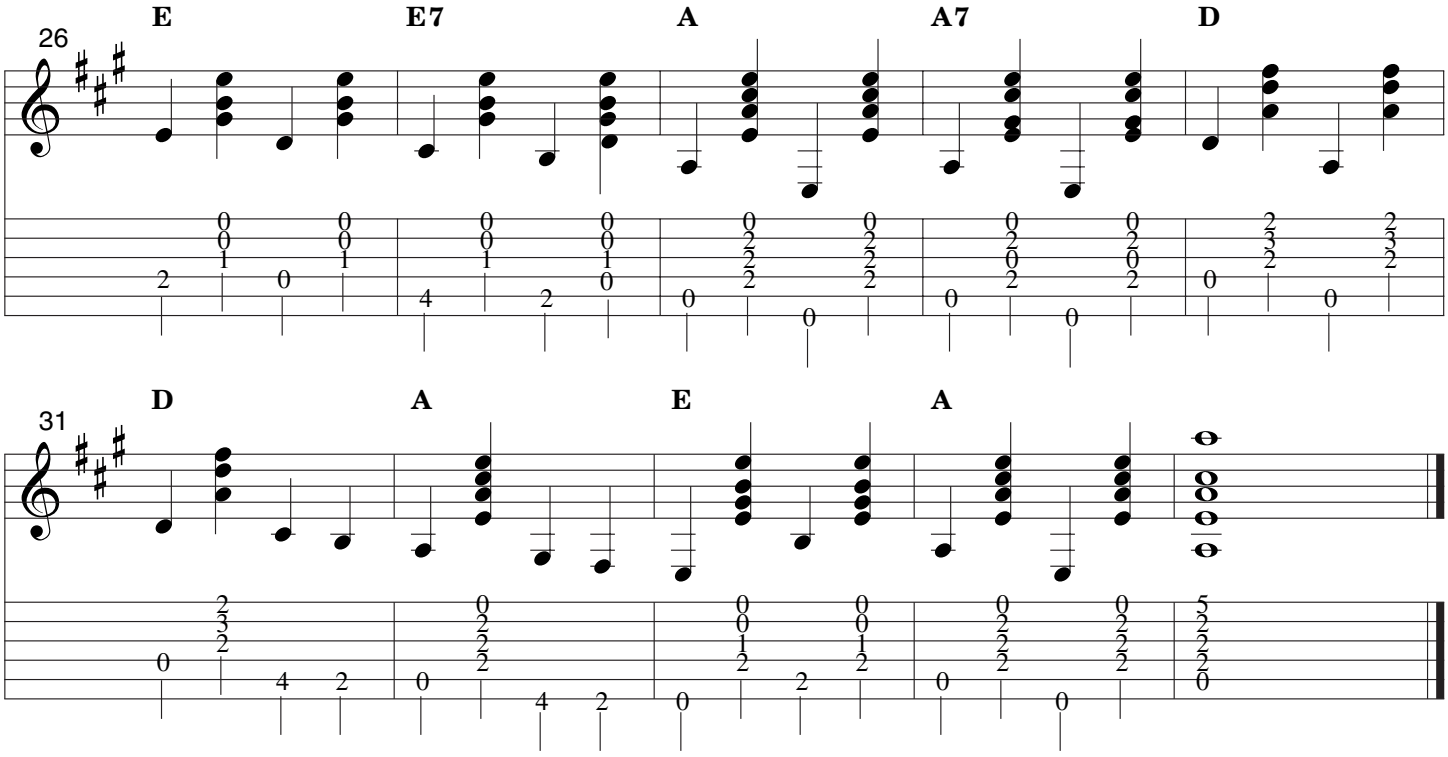

Key of A Rhythm Progression (con't)



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Flatpicking & Folk/Acoustic Rock

by John Tindel

Can't Find My Way Home

For those of us that can still remember it, the summer of '69 was an adventurous, trippy, "anything goes" kind of a time. Across the pond in England, a supergroup of sorts had formed and was recording some groundbreaking new music. The partnership between Steve Winwood of Traffic fame, and Rick Gretch, Eric Clapton and Ginger Baker of Cream that resulted in Blind Faith was very big news indeed. While working on their debut album they laid down a rather rough, electrified first version of Steve Winwood's brilliant composition, "Can't Find My Way Home." Convinced that the song's full potential hadn't yet been realized, weeks later they had another go at it. This time going the all-acoustic route, they recorded live with just three mics and Steve singing and playing at the same time. Take number "21" yielded the amazing piece of work that made it on to the record and into a lot of people's homes and hearts.

One of the many things that makes this song work so well is the subtle interplay between the two classical guitars with Eric Clapton's elegant leads weaving through the fingerpicked chords.

I have tabbed out the basic chordal accompaniment to a verse part and the two middle solo sections. The lead parts are shorter than they would normally be as a result of a vocal line that Steve Winwood sings over the B part of both sections. He is actually singing the organ part he had previously come up with for the earlier electric version and the lead stops playing to avoid stepping on his lovely falsetto vocals. Since you probably do not happen to have Steve Winwood around to sing his part, feel free to come up with your own guitar part for which I have conveniently provided the rhythm accompaniment.

Every column needs a bonus lick and this one's no exception. On the audio CD you'll hear a rockin' little thing that combines two simple picking techniques into one smooth move. You got your string bend and you got your pull-off. Just do 'em at the same time. Not precisely at the same time, just really close together. Reminds me of the old saying "Time is God's way of making sure everything doesn't happen at once." (Sounds like some guitar solos I've heard, but that's another column!) Anyway, hit your high E string 3rd fret, or the G note. Now bend it up a little and then immediately pull-off to the open E, followed by the open B string. Repeat in triplet form as rapidly as required and as often as needed when you feel the onset of that rock and roll pneumonia and the boogie woogie flu!

Until next time, remember to play more music. A recent study shows conclusively that the more music you play, the longer you live! A win/win situation, I'd say!

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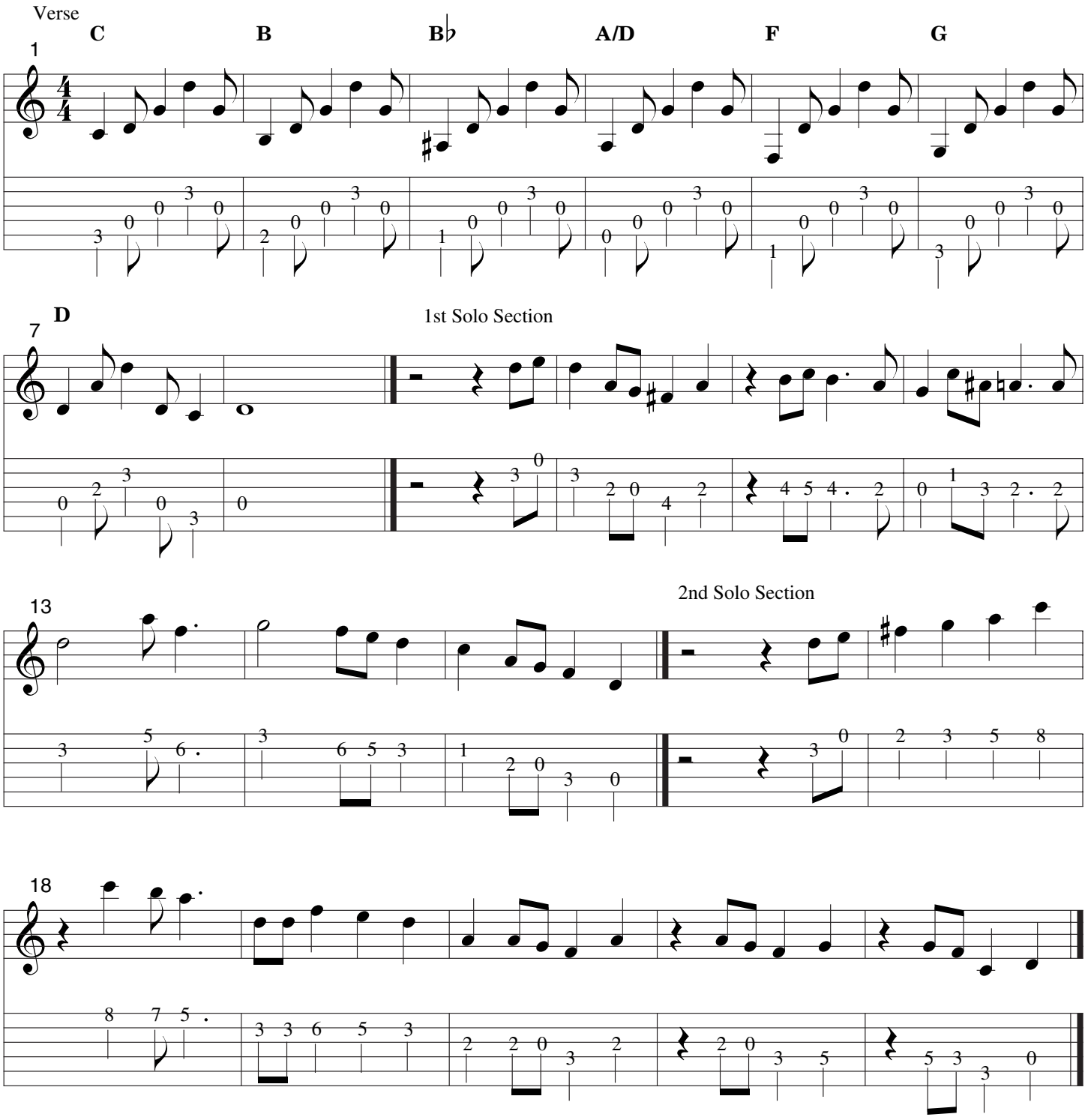
Can't Find My Way Home

Steve Winwood **Arranged by John Tindel**

Guitar Maintenance and Repair

by Frank Ford

Simple Crack Repair Or is it?

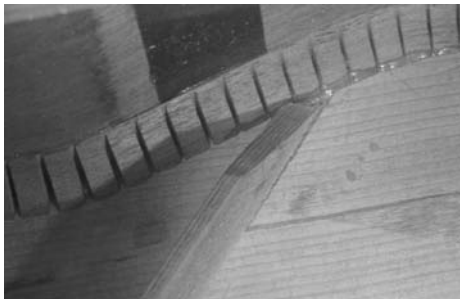
Crack repair is one of the most simple of all guitar repair jobs. Or, it can be just about the most impossible, depending on where the crack occurs. Reaching, clamping, and even identifying some cracks can be a daunting, if not a near impossible task. For this short article, I'd like to address a really straightforward and easily reached crack repair.

In general, crack repair is a matter of reattaching broken pieces with glue, and, if the cracks are in a vulnerable area, doing a bit of reinforcement to avoid having them break open again. Glue manufacturers often claim that their products will provide a joint that's "stronger than the wood itself," and in certain kinds of tests, that may be true. But, the glued crack is never the same as the original wood, so it may be less flexible and more prone to cracking than it had been before. Often, as in this case, it's a good idea to reinforce a cracked area to make it more rigid.

This 1930s Gibson LG-2 suffered a pair of cracks in bass side the top, possibly as a result of being leaned on.

Although it's a bit difficult to see in this photo taken through a mirror inside the guitar, both top braces in the area also broke loose from the top at their ends.

If you look closely, you'll see that the braces actually end right at the edge of the kerfed lining that runs around the top edge. This kind of injury is much less likely to happen if the braces are not cut short but left about 1/8" thick and notched under the lining. That way, when downward pressure is applied, the braces don't break free from the top but help to support it. Martin, for example, has always notched the braces under the lining for just this reason.

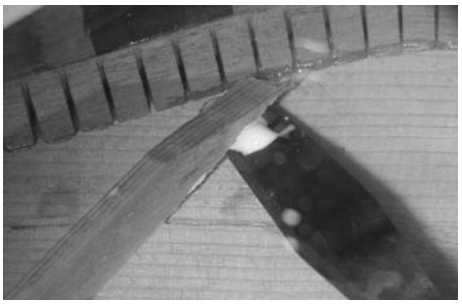


The first order of business was to level up, seal and glue the top cracks, so I pressed alternately downward from the outside, and upward from the inside to open the cracks, so I could massage in some glue.

Once I was sure I got the cracks loaded with glue, I cleaned the excess off the finish.

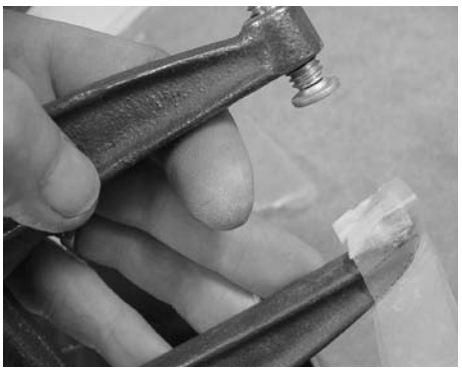
This was also a good time to get the braces reglued, so I used a shortened, thin palette knife as both an applicator and a tool to separate the braces from the top.

Reaching in the soundhole, it was easy for me to smear glue under the brace ends:

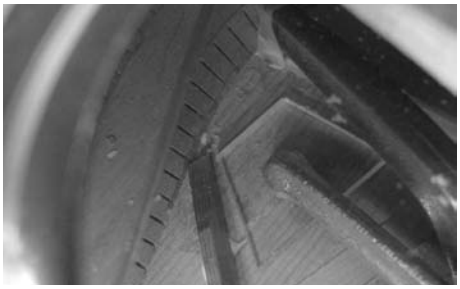


Another opportunity to clean up the excess glue with a wet towel.

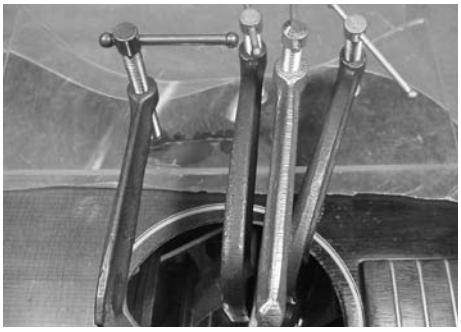
In order to clamp the ends of the braces without damaging them, I protected the ends of a pair of clamps with a resilient pad, or "caul." Then, when I clamped the braces, I wouldn't make big dents in them.



For the area between the braces, I use a flat plate of acrylic to make sure that the cracks were in perfect alignment as the glue dried:

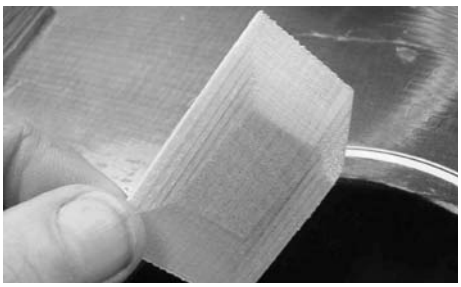


And, on the outside, another flat plate of acrylic, with some waxed paper to keep the glue from attaching the guitar's finish to the acrylic plate.



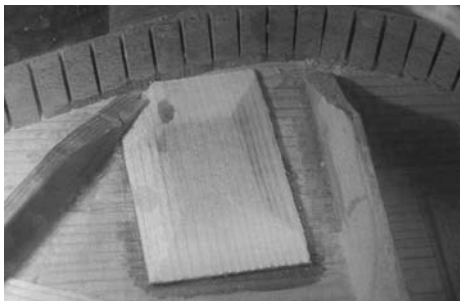
After the glue dried overnight, I was satisfied that the crack was aligned and was solid. Another quick cleaning with water wiped away the excess glue that had squeezed out when the assembly was clamped up.

Because the area between the braces and the braces themselves allowed the top to flex and crack so easily, I decided that it would be a good idea to reinforce the area to stiffen it and lessen the chance of revisiting the top cracks.

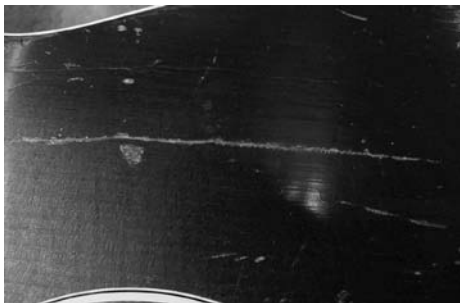


I made up a spruce reinforcement plate that was just about as thick as the top itself, around 1/8" thick. Ordinarily, small cracks like these would not require such a stout reinforcement, but I wanted to make up for the fact that the top flexed and allowed the braces to pop loose. With a stronger reinforcement patch in the area, the top couldn't bend as easily and the braces would tend to remain secure, even if the top received the same treatment that cause the break in the first place. I made the patch to fit the area between the braces, and aligned it so that the grain of the patch was perpendicular to the grain of the guitar top for maximum support.

I used pretty much the same clamping arrangement, with the flat acrylic plate on the top to keep the area flat as the glue cured under the patch.



All done. The top is flat and level, the crack is tight and solid, and the top is stronger than before, even though the original brace design had left a little to be desired:



A bit of finish touchup might be in order. Or, in this case, it might not, because the rest of the guitar looks pretty rough, so most folks, including its owner, feel it's best left as is.

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Kaufman's Corner

by Steve Kaufman

John Henry

Hi friends and welcome back to the real world. Kamp is over and it was unbelievable! The kampers, instructors, Kenny Smith, Bryan Kimsey, et al. were incredible to be around. Congratulations to the winners of the D-18, Big Baby Taylor and all the other sponsor donations.

Now, my first duty is to get back to writing columns. I taught this song by ear at the Kamp this year and many of the kampers wanted to see it in print, so here you go.

Be sure to hit the slides hard and sustain them over the next note. This way the notes all ring to the max.

In the 2nd break pay attention to the crosspicking pattern roll. Accent the 1st string notes in these measures.

Have fun with this great tune and you'll be hearing from me soon.

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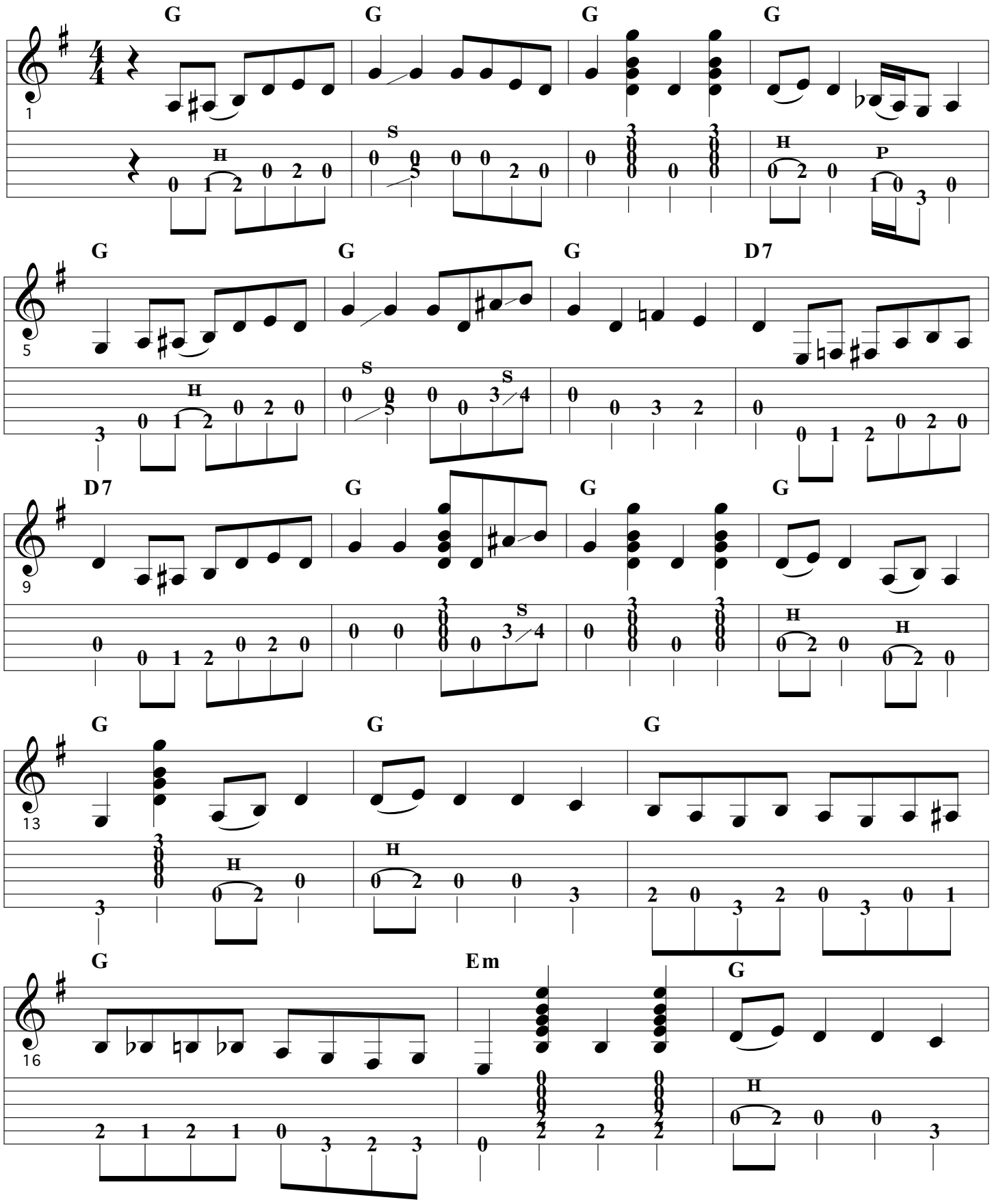
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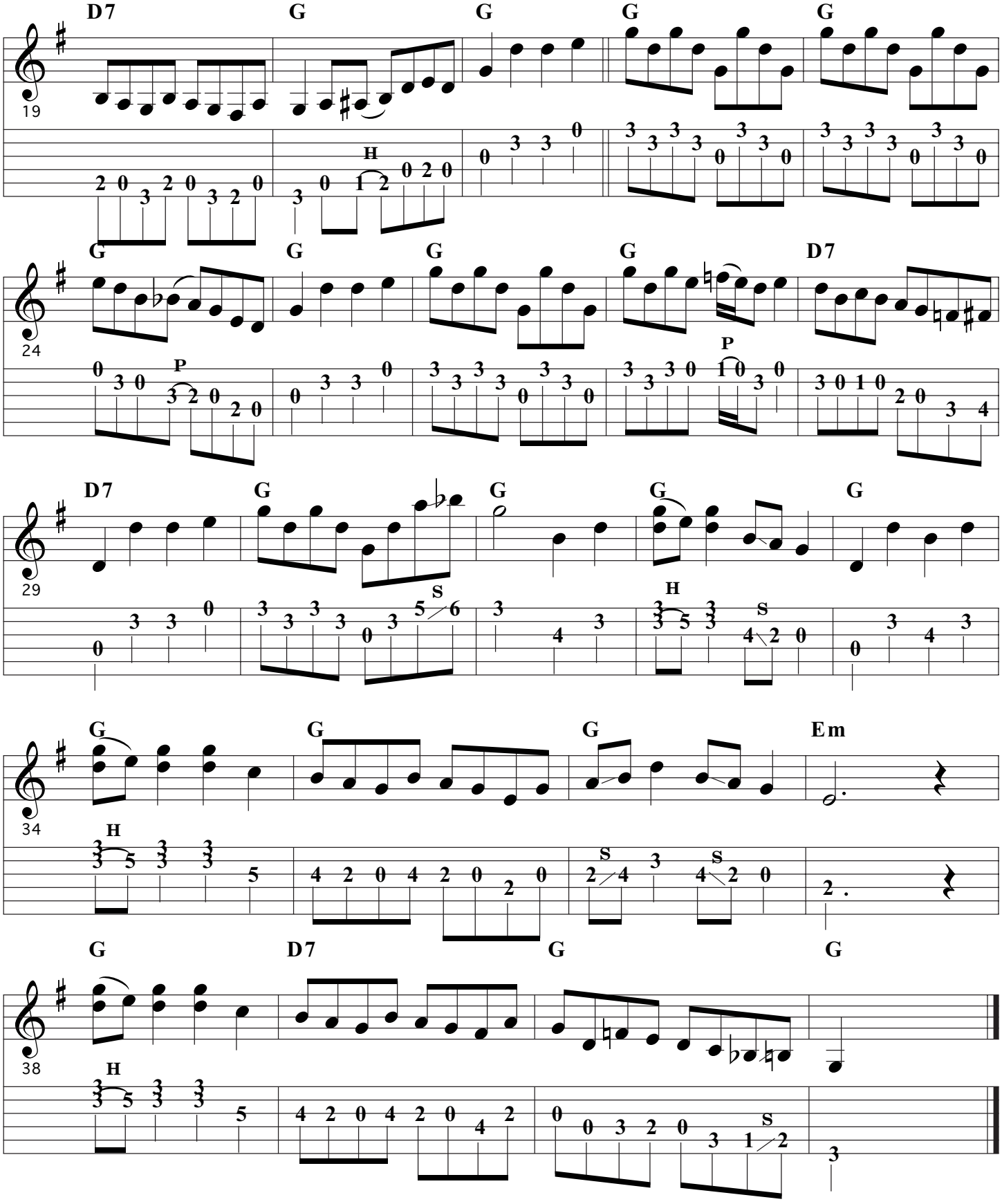
Adventures in Acoustic Music:
Chopin for Flatpickers

by John Carlini

Legato Phrasing

This is a really important concept. It's all about controlling the notes that you play. Legato phrasing is not limited to the guitar. It is a way of expressing music. The word "legato" is often written as a direction on a piece of music. It means "to perform the passage in a smooth and connected manner, with no break between the tones" (this according to my handy pocket manual of musical terms). This is such an important topic that I wanted to dedicate an entire column to it. Perhaps two!

Legato is kind of the opposite of "staccato." You probably know that staccato means "a style in which the notes played are more or less abruptly disconnected." In my teaching travels I hear a lot of staccato guitar playing, or maybe somewhere in between legato and staccato. It takes a lot of hand control and strength to develop a nice flowing legato phrasing ability. But the musical rewards are worth the effort. And it helps in other areas as well, among them: "pulling" tone or getting more potential out of the sound of your instrument (or getting your money's worth out of those expensive exotic woods!); becoming more expressive, which leads to "meaning the notes" that you play; and developing the ability to actually have certain notes sustain while other notes move! Sure! It can be done! And I'm going to tell you about an exercise that will put you on that path. It's called the "crab walk." And it's not easy. But we all know that guitar playing imitates life. Did I mention that it sounds weird?

The crab walk is for "control freaks." Here's how it goes. Set your hand in the fifth position. (This can be done in any position, but I like to use position five.) Play the notes in the diagrm on the next page in numerical order from 1 to 8. Playing in position five means, of course, that notes 4 and 7 will be fretted with the index finger, notes 2 and 5 with the middle finger, notes 8 and 3 with the ring finger, and 6 and 1 with the pinky. Don't bar across the 2nd and 1st strings. Play the notes individually.

Here's another important concept. Remember I said that the crab walk is for "control freaks"! Play slowly. Painstakingly slowly! Put your metronome on about 44! Play one note per click. This is obviously not a speed exercise. It's all about developing control and strength. Play hard to get the best tone possible. Don't move to the next note in sequence until the last possible fraction of a second in order to get the most sustain out of each note.

Oh, I almost forgot. You have to keep your left thumb behind the neck. Imagine that your thumb would get whacked with a hammer if it crept up over the neck. This is where the strength comes in. If you practice correctly, your hand will become a vice with the thumb pushing against the fingers, with the neck in between. Imagine a golf ball resting in the palm of your hand so that your hand could not cave in on the neck. I told you this would not be easy!

OK. So after a while you play these eight weird sounding notes over and over and you'd think that, well, this isn't so hard, even with the correct hand position. You'd be correct. So. It's time for "The crab walk from---", uh, well let's just say a much deeper level of crab walk.

Here goes. Play note 1. While note 1 is ringing, play note 2. While note 2 is ringing, play note 3, and so on. The most difficult part is playing note 1 again while note 8 is ringing. No cheating. Legato. One note smoothly flowing into another. In fact, it's beyond legato!

There's even a level beyond that! Set your metronome to 80 or so. On the 1st click, play note 1. On the second click, set your 2nd finger on note 2. On the next click play note 2 while note 1 is still ringing. On the next click, set your 3rd finger on note 3. On the next click play note 3 while note 2 is still ringing, and so on. So it's "note, set, note, set", etc. See where this is going? Now getting from note 8 to note 1 is much more difficult. Keep that thumb down! Whack!! Can you take more? OK. Move notes 1, 3, 5 , and 7 to the 3rd string. Leave the other notes on the 1st string. Now the stretch is more intense. Perhaps you're thinking, "Oh no! I have to move those notes to the 4th, 5th, and even the 6th string!?" Yes. Even the 6th string.

Next time we'll talk about how the crab walk effects actual real music. But maybe by then you'll be experiencing the effects on your own. Have fun!

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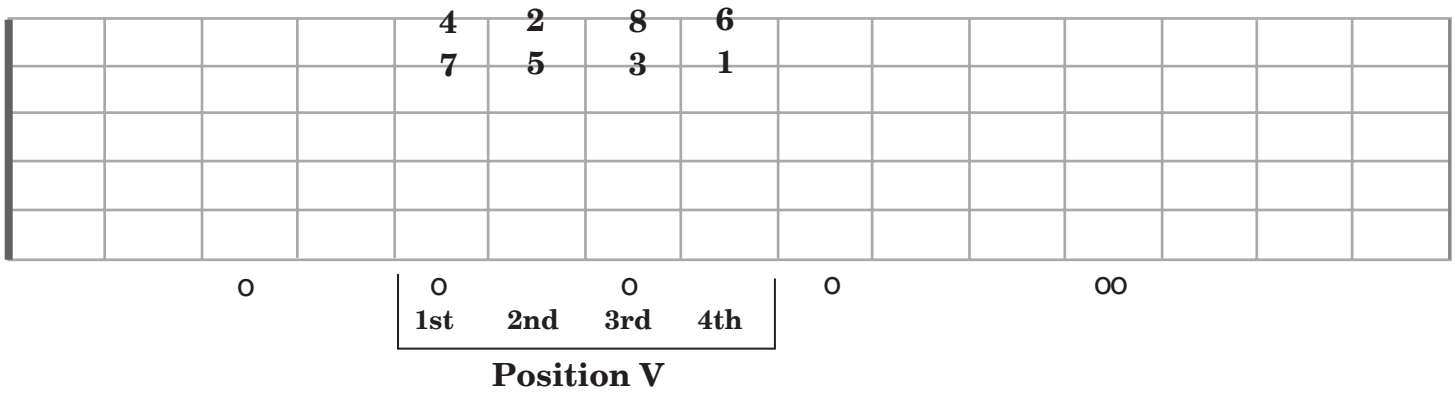
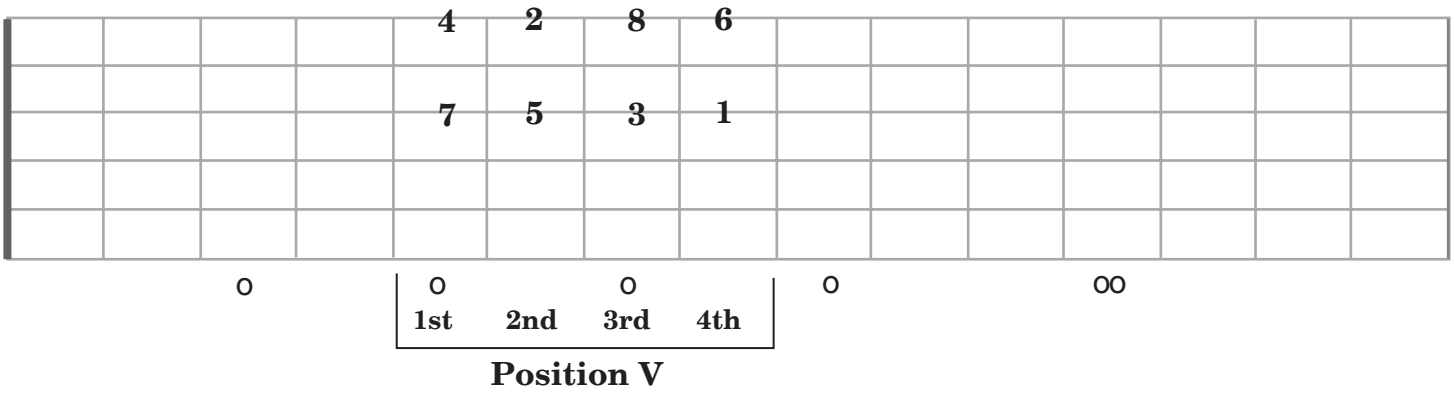
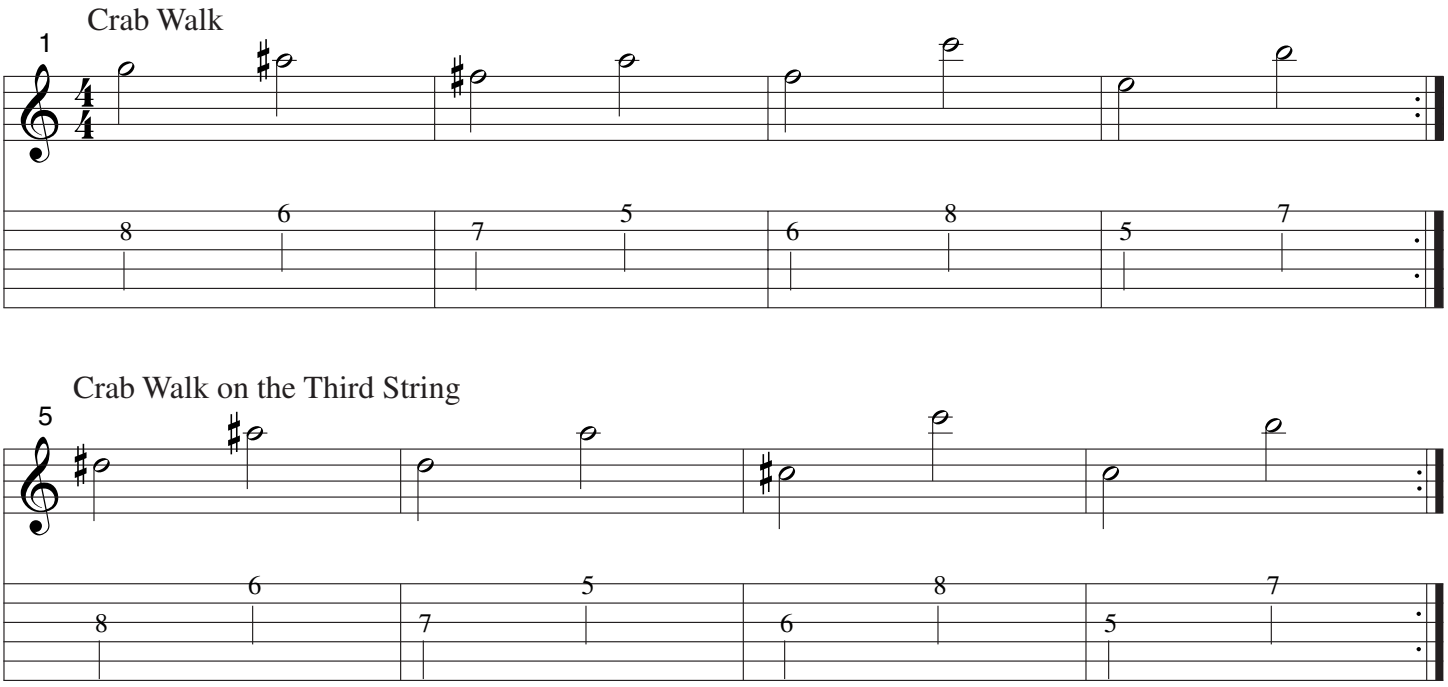
Crab Walk



Crab Walk on Third String



Crab Walk Tab:



Flatpick Profile:
Uwe Kruger

by Dan Miller

"Those guys are great!" is the phrase you will typically hear enthusiastically rumbling throughout an audience of smiling faces after any Kruger Brothers set. While the statement itself certainly refers to the trio's astounding musical talents, the enthusiasm and joyfulness behind the statement is a result of the Kruger Brothers' ability to entertain people. When they are on stage playing for an audience the Kruger Brothers of Switzerland—Jens Kruger on banjo, Uwe Kruger on guitar, and Joel Landsberg on resophonic bass—view themselves as entertainers first, musicians second. Uwe (pronounced "Oovay") says, "Our job is to entertain the audience. Our approach is to do that by having fun. If we are not having fun on stage, the audience will not have fun."

Fun is definitely what a Kruger Brothers audience experiences. The person on stage who is ensuring that the audience is going to have fun, enjoy the show and be entertained is Uwe. He views this as part of his job and he takes it very seriously. "My goal is to entertain people." Uwe says, "From the beginning that was very clear. To me, the purpose of music is not self-therapy. It is a form of communication. I choose to entertain people because I think when people go to a show or party they do not want to be confronted with the turmoils of life. They want something else. When I play music, I want to entertain people. There are several ways to do that. My brother entertains with melody and harmonic structure. I do it by providing the rhythm so that people can dance."

As the show's MC, Uwe takes the communication aspect of his job beyond the music, "My art is to go to a place early enough so that I can get a feel for my audience. I read the local newspapers. I look at their cars. I look at their homes. I listen to them talk. What are their interests? I look at their faces and try to read what the audience is going to be like. I ask the organizer, 'What is my audience going to be like tonight?' Then I sit up there on stage and try to get a feeling. Because we are from overseas, it is also a cultural exchange. But I'll start off first with something they know. Every musician is a teacher. Every audience is a teacher. You have to work with the audience. You have to do what the heart feels needs to be done to connect with the audience. Communication is only possible between equals. If I go up there and put my sunglasses on and want to show everyone how great I am, it is not equal anymore. If you do that you have cut off communication. My role as the guitar player is to feel this stuff out. It is a big part of my job. It is part of the guitar player's role. If a musician doesn't know his role in the band, there is something wrong."

Uwe's ability to connect with the audience and provide them with an entertaining show has developed over a career that has already spanned thirty years. The Kruger Brothers have been performing for audiences at festivals, clubs, bars, auditoriums, theaters, and on the streets consistently since Uwe, the older of the two Kruger brothers, was fourteen. And from the beginning, they were performing American roots music.

Although the Krugers grew up in Switzerland, their father had worked on a project during the 1950s in Colorado. When he returned to Switzerland he brought back old country music and Dixieland records. Uwe recalls, "We always liked that stuff and we grew up with it. We didn't have a TV set so we would always sing music before we went to sleep. My mother played guitar and we would sing German folk songs when we were very young. Guitars are native to Germany. In fact, the place where Mr. Martin started his guitar company in Germany was only about 40 miles from where my family was from. We always had a guitar around the house and I was interested in learning to play it. My mother told me that I could start learning to play the guitar when I could put my hand around the neck and my thumb and middle fingers could touch. That finally happened when I was seven or eight."

When he first started learning how to play, Uwe was attracted to some of Chet Atkins' playing that he had heard on records that his father owned. However when he was nine he saw Doc Watson on television and said, "That is what I want to do!" He cut a guitar pick out of on old yogurt container and began learning American folk songs. Uwe explains, "When I was young, shortly after I started to learn how to read, my mother gave me an English phrase book and said, 'If you want to go places, learn English.' My dad spoke English and he helped me and I started learning how to sing songs in English. My mother was a kindergarten teacher and she had a pupil in class whose father was an English teacher. He was from New York and had been stationed in Germany when he was in the service. He used to teach English using American folk songs. He had all of the folkways recordings—Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly, and the Weavers. That was in 1970 when I first heard that stuff. He showed me some things on the guitar and

taught me these songs. I had a tape recorder and would record these things. I got the Pete Seeger songbook. I started playing guitar and Jens played harmonica. When he was old enough to play a stringed instrument he started on banjo." Thus the Kruger Brothers band was born.

When Uwe was thirteen, the brothers played their first gig and decided then and there that they wanted to be professional musicians. Uwe recalls, "Our first gig was at a department store in Switzerland. At the time our allowance was 50 cents a week and we made $80 at the show. That is when we decided we wanted to be musicians. We had an uncle who was a professional trumpet player. He said, 'If you boys want to be musicians, don't think you can get away with working less than anyone else.' He had us practicing, practicing, practicing."

While the Kruger Brothers have played many bluegrass festivals here in the United States, they do not view themselves as a bluegrass band. "We get labeled as a bluegrass band, but we aren't a bluegrass band at all." Uwe explains, "We just have a banjo, guitar, and a bass. We don't have a fiddle, we don't have a mandolin, we don't have a dobro, we don't have high lonesome voices." And the Kruger Brothers music is very diverse. Uwe adds, "We are influenced by a variety of music and bands—from Mozart, to the Grateful Dead, to ZZ Top. I am one of the firm believers that ZZ Top is the loudest bluegrass band in the world. They are like a bluegrass band with amps."

Although the Krugers are not a bluegrass band, Uwe and Jens both went through periods in their life when that is all they wanted to play. Uwe said, "When I was twenty I wanted to be just like Lester Flatt." Jens also wanted to be just like Bill Monroe, and it was Bill Monroe's advice to him that changed his mind. Jens had come to the United States to attend Monroe's Bean Blossom festival. He met Monroe there and Monroe hired him to perform some shows with the band, since his regular banjo player was not available. Jens told Monroe, "I want to be just like you. I want to play bluegrass the rest of my life." Monroe told Jens, "I'm already doing that. You should do something different." Uwe says, "That is the essence of what Jens brought back. It really made us think. There was already that music; there was no need to recreate or clone that. We decided to learn all that and then take it a step farther. In Europe we have a very mixed relationship with tradition. We have seen tradition being misused and mistreated and we have felt a need to put in innovation. When Bill Monroe started bluegrass he was like a punk band was in the seventies and eighties: everything was too fast, too loud, and too high. Flatt & Scruggs were the same way. We saw on an old Flatt & Scruggs album that described their music as 'folk music in overdrive.' Monroe and Flatt & Scruggs were very innovative. It is great to have bands that recreate the old stuff and preserve it. But the bands we liked to listen to were the ones who would take it a step farther."

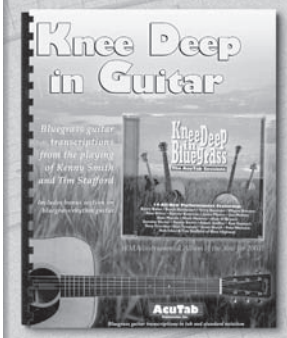
Uwe continues, "We put all of our influences into our music. We honor tradition, but to survive musically we learn how to interpret songs in our own way. In order to communicate with the audience we choose songs that we can give a meaning to in today's life. What is in there that is still true today? We grew up with everything, classical to jazz. I have the same amount of Prince and Queen in my brain as I do Bill Monroe or Doc Watson. I've played in hard-core rockabilly bands. I was a heavy metal freak. All these influences we put in our music." Once you've heard the Krugers play "Country Roads" to a Reggae beat with Jamaica-inspired lyrics, you realize that Uwe's statement is very true.

As a result of the diverse musical blend represented in the Kruger Brother's music, Uwe demonstrates a tremendous versatility on the guitar. While he is certainly a very skilled and talented lead guitar player, he feels that playing rhythm playing and accompaniment is his main role. He explains, "The guitar's role is accompaniment first. I try to take every accompaniment note as serious as if I was playing lead. With a trio, you cannot hide. I treat everything with that respect."

Complimenting the other band members is Uwe's first priority. "Our approach is that all of the musicians on stage are doing something together for the audience. A lot of guitar players are not in it for the entertainment part. They don't want to share something with you; they want to show you what they've learned. It is like a poet constantly reading his poetry to you. It is boring after a while. Instead of listening to the other musicians and working to compliment them, some players are thinking, 'I hope my next solo is going to blow them away.' For me, playing music is about being in the moment. You can't be in the moment if you are thinking about the past or what you are going to do in the future."

Regarding his lead playing, Uwe says, "I always try to play the melody. Bill Monroe said, 'A good solo is nothing more than the melody played with good timing.' Good

Knee Deep In Guitar!



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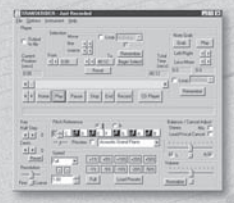

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timing is what we all fight for. Music is the art of time. Dance music has to have the right time, so that is the most important part."

Although Uwe is primarily self-taught on the guitar, he views every musician he has had the opportunity to play music with as a teacher. Being an English-speaking American music enthusiast, Uwe has had the opportunity to play music in Switzerland with some of the best musicians America has to offer. When many American musicians perform in Switzerland they don't typically travel with a band. On many occasions Uwe has been called on to assemble bands to perform with a wide variety of American performers. Additionally, he has been called on to translate many workshops for American musicians. Uwe says, "I would be the translator for workshops, but the people in the audience would be too shy to ask questions. So I would ask my own questions and translate the answers. I got my private lesson with people watching."

Uwe's advice to individuals who are learning how to play the guitar is to start with very simple songs. He says that if a beginning player is trying to pick out Tony Rice's version to "Blackberry Blossom," then they are skipping steps. He says, "If you learn a Tony Rice solo note-for-note and you go to a jam session and they are playing the song in a different key, then you are lost. You don't know the melody. When you don't know the melody the communication is lost. Don't start with Tony Rice, start with 'Go Tell Aunt Rhodie' and progress from there."

Uwe's talent on the guitar could have landed him in any great European classical music conservatory. Instead of studying formal styles of music Uwe chose to "join the search for new things and new worlds." If you have the chance, I recommend that you go see a Kruger Brothers show. The Krugers will take you along on their journey to discover new things and new worlds; you will definitely enjoy the ride.

Uwe's Guitar:

For many years Uwe played a Doc Watson signature Gallagher guitar. Uwe says, "I don't have one style of music that I play, I have to do a lot of things—fiddle tunes, rhythm, all of these things. The Gallagher was the first guitar that I owned that could handle all these styles. When you know Doc Watson, he plays everything. We have all of those elements too. That was the first guitar sturdy enough to take all the abuse. We work a lot with dynamics. We have songs that go from a whisper to a scream. My guitar takes a lot of abuse."

For the past year, Uwe's main guitar has been a custom built Wayne Henderson guitar. It is a Brazilian rosewood 14-fret M-size guitar with a sunburst red spruce top. Uwe said, "It was specifically constructed for my application needs. It has a warm and big sound without being too boomy." Regarding the building of the guitar Uwe said, "I became friends with Wayne and I had this old Martian Brazilian rosewood guitar body. Wayne put a new top and neck on it. It has a big neck on it, which I like. The guitar was built for me, so it feels like a comfortable pair of shoes. Wayne is a great builder. He has something special."

The Kruger Brothers on CD:
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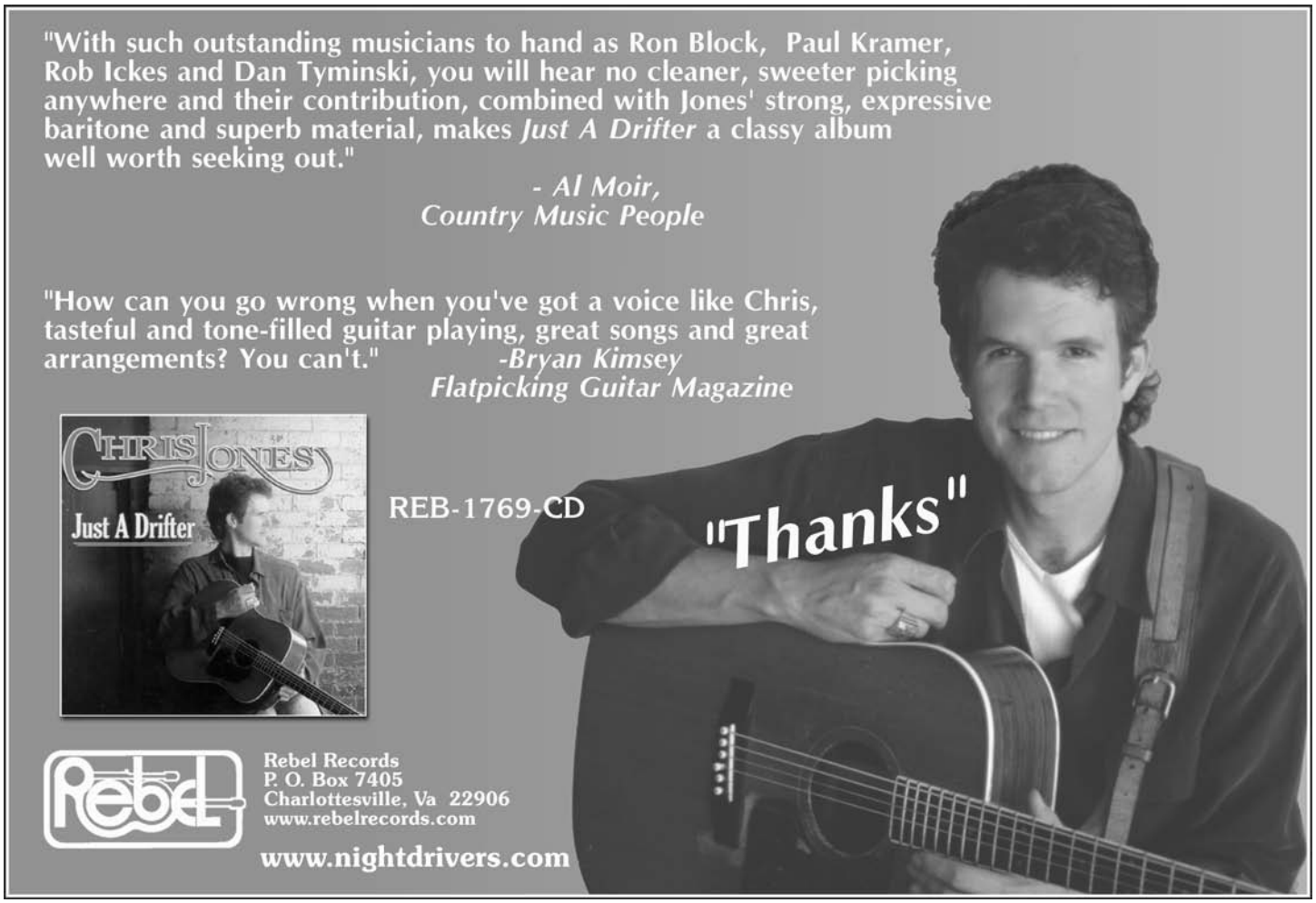
To learn more about the Kruger Brothers, visit them on the web:
www.krugerbrothers.com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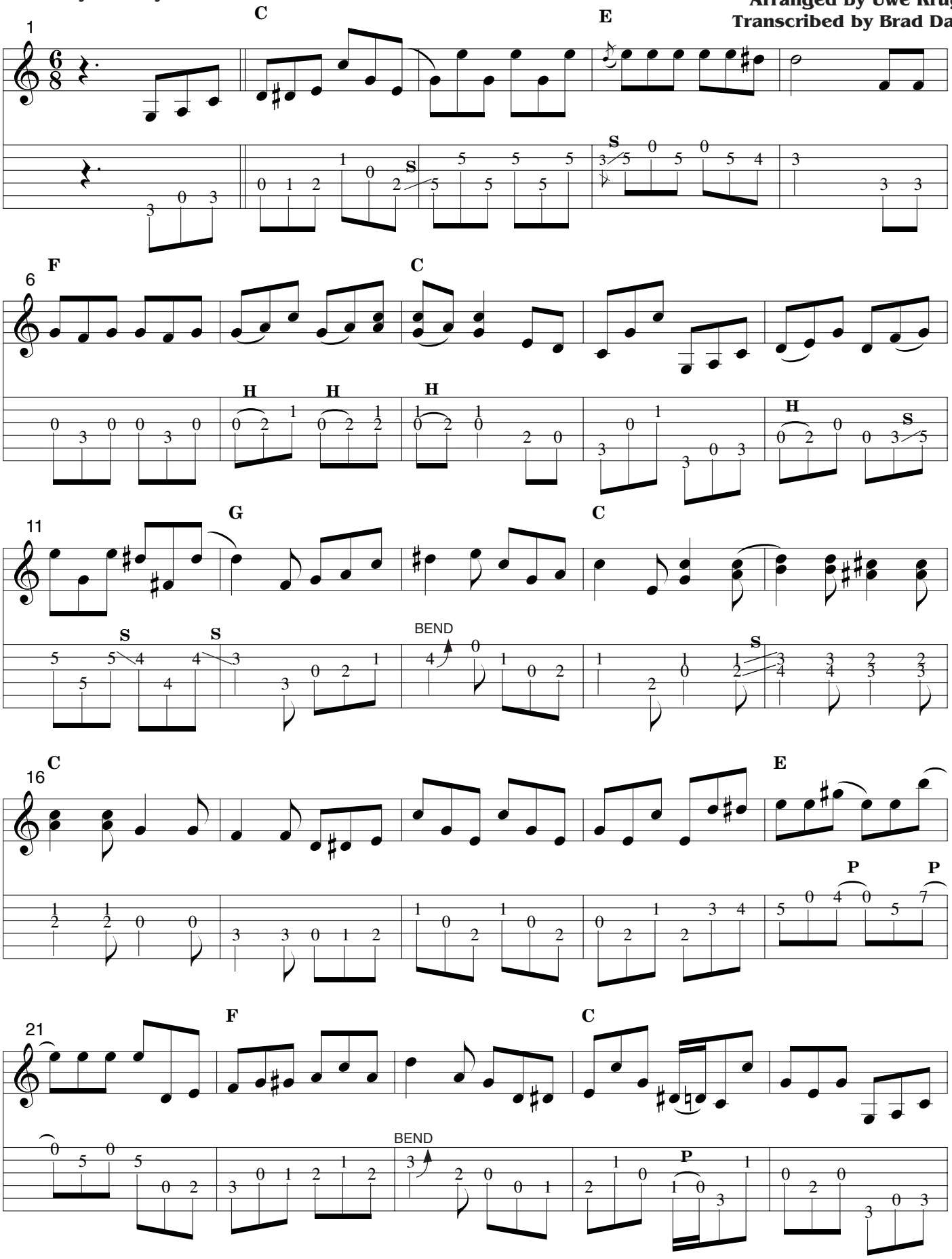
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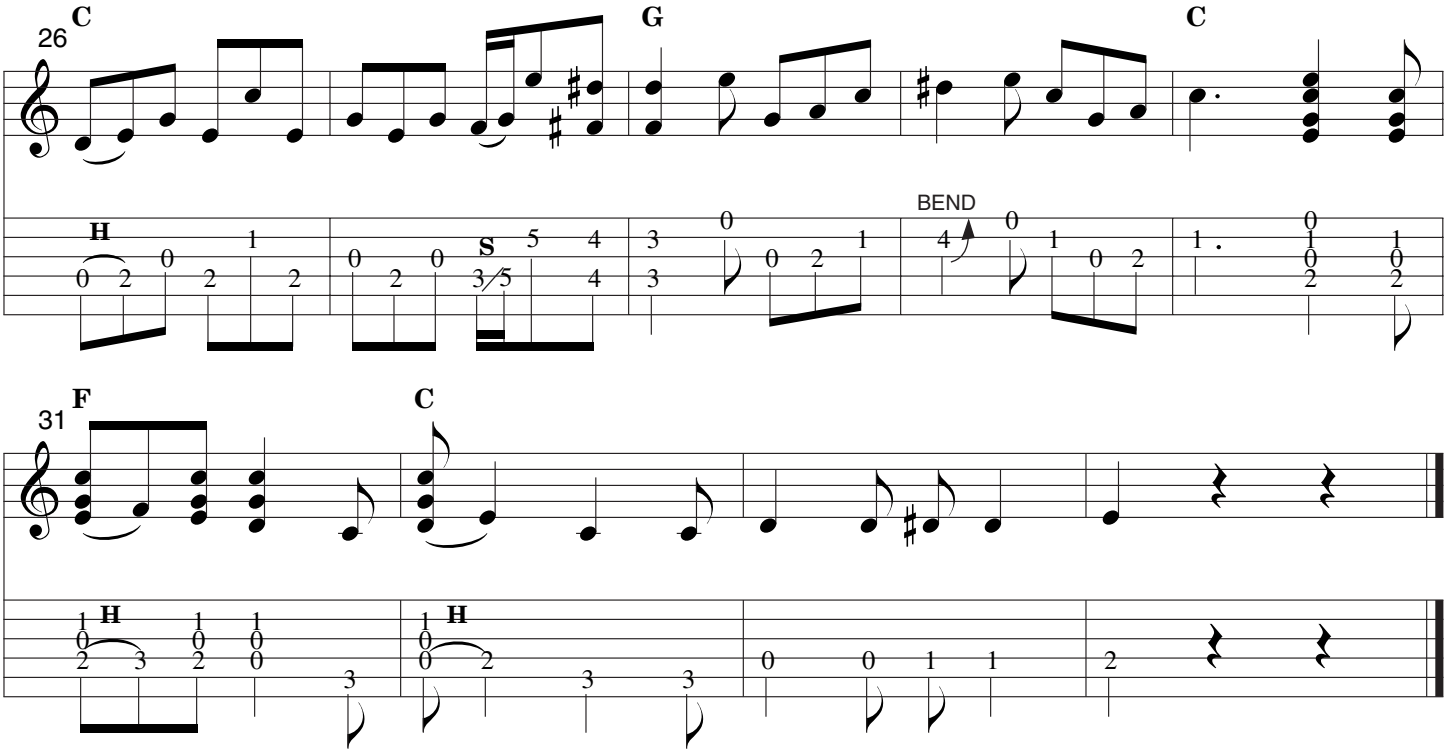
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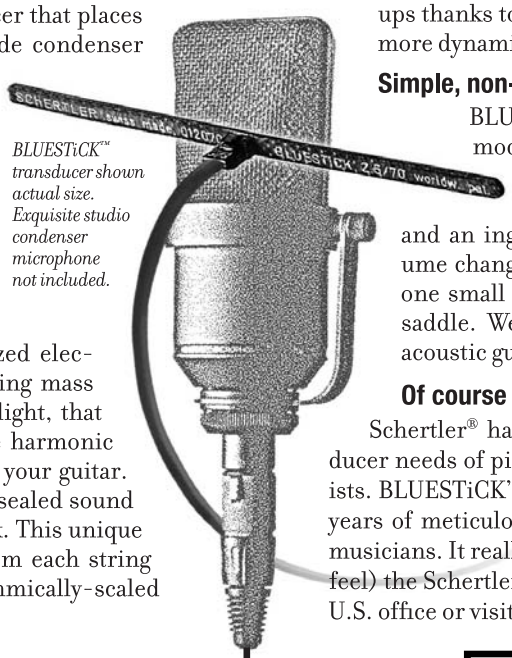

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A Hitchhiker's Guide to Buying a Selmer Guitar

David Hodson's A Model

by Jerry W. Rudy

So you're starting to explore gypsy jazz and you've bought some Django CDs. At first you say, "Wow, can you believe what this guy was doing, but what's with the sound?" Both the rhythm and soloing sound like nothing you've ever heard before—a little harsh on the soloing and a lot of chatter in the rhythm. Then you remember that the recordings are very old, made in the 1930s and 40s, so you think it must be the recordings. At any rate, you think Django is great but the tone is a little strange. Nevertheless, you keep on listening. When you buy a couple CDs featuring some modern descendants of the Django tradition, you realize it's not the recording. Then a strange thing starts to happen. You start to like the sound, then not just like but crave the sound! It becomes an addiction. You get interested in the instrument and learn that Django played something called a Selmer-Maccaferri guitar. When you discover Francois Charles' book on the history of this guitar, with its wonderful pictures, you become fascinated by the design and that funny-looking cutaway with the small, oval sound hole and mustache bridge starts to look beautiful. You begin to work your way up from a want to a need (we guitar players and horse lovers have that part down pat).

Now you've got to have a Selmer, but you know that Selmer quit making guitars about 50 years ago. So unless you've got $10,000 to $30,000 to drop on a vintage instrument, you're not going to get a Selmer. You learn, however, that there are a number of luthiers who specialize in making replicas of the Selmer, but the price of a replica is also steep (generally over $2,000). Odds are you're not going to find one in your local music store, so you're going to have to buy one sight unseen and pay a bundle to boot. Then you get lucky and come across the web site of a British luthier, David Hodson. For some reason, David's price for a Selmer replica is about half the price of others. You've been around enough to know that there is something to the saying that you get what you pay for, so the price makes you a little nervous. However, a review by jazz guitarist Andy MacKensie puts you at ease. His conclusion is that if you are looking for a work of art, the Hodson guitar (A Model) is not what you want. But if you want a playable guitar that replicates the Selmer gypsy sound, Hodson is your guy.

David Hodson in his shop

Thus began my e-mail relationship with David Hodson. David informed me that he had indeed replicated the original Selmer construction and the "sound," and that I would like his instrument. However, he said that if I was into instant gratification, I was out of luck because he had thirty orders ahead of me. Although I like instant gratification, I also like anticipation and the idea that thirty others were ahead of me increased my confidence that I would be satisfied. So in early November, I commissioned David to make me a guitar, asking if it could possibly be done by my 60th birthday in late April. When he said that would be no problem, I thought to myself, yeah, when pigs fly. Nevertheless I stayed in touch, trying not to drive him crazy while reminding him that I was in the picture. He always responded with honesty and humor. Then in April a miracle happened! He e-mailed me that the guitar would arrive in about four working days, a week prior to my birthday party.

David produces two ranges of instruments in the Selmer and the Maccaferri style. The high end SR model (currently priced at $1,500) has a glossy finish, Schaller tuners, radiused ebony fingerboard and ebony bridge, Santos rosewood back and sides, solid spruce top, and a brass tail piece. The lower end A model ($1,300) has a matte finish, brass tuners, flat rosewood fingerboard and bridge, and spruce and copper tail piece. Both models are based on the same original Selmer construction methods and said to produce the same sound. The neck (45 mm at the nut) is made of laminated mahogany but does not have truss rod. The price includes a decent hard shell case and a couple of sets of strings. I ordered the A model but with the high-end Schaller tuners and a brass tail piece.

When I opened the case, the first thing I noticed was that the guitar is remarkably light. This is because the top is extremely thin and the bracing is very light. It is this combination that produces its unique sound. When I started to play it, however, I thought that I had bought a snare drum. David had set the action very low, so there was way too much string rattle on the finger board and the guitar did not have a satisfactory tone. However, this led to my next discovery: not only did the guitar have a movable bridge, but the saddle could be removed, and I could easily raise the action by placing very thin shims that David had

Jerry Rudy with his Hodson Guitar

provided into the saddle well. Sure enough, once I got the action right it produced the sound that I had craved, and the tone gets better by the week.

Although my guitar looks and plays great, it is not perfect. There are a couple of cosmetic flaws. The bottom side of the instrument is not completely rounded, and my favorite luthier, John Eaton, noted that the fingerboard has a slight relief problem that down the road might require a little work and that, to an expert, the binding is not perfect. If I were to compare its construction to my high-end Santa Cruz Tony Rice, with the "Cruz" being a 10, then overall the Hodson A model would rate a bit under an 8. Given the price differential, that's more than acceptable!

So I could not care less that the guitar isn't perfect. It plays great and I have gotten so addicted to its sound that I prefer playing it to either my Guild Artist Series or my Cruz. Moreover, I rate my experience with David as A+. He is a completely trustworthy businessman with a delightful sense of humor, who delivered my guitar when promised.

So, if you are looking for the Selmer sound at a reasonable price, and a businessman you can trust, I highly recommend checking out David's web page at www.hodsonjazzguitars.com. You might also check out www.hotclub.co.uk/index.html to get a list of other luthiers who make Selmer-Maccaferri replicas. Latcha drum!

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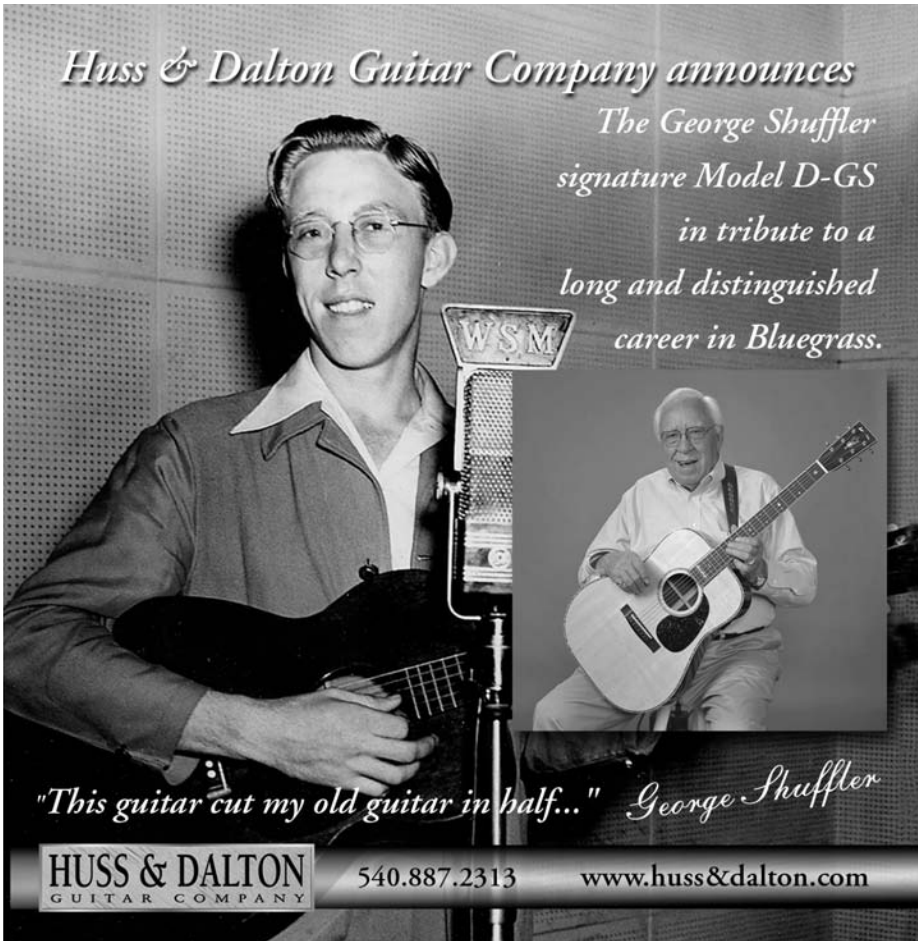
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NASHVILLE FLATTOP

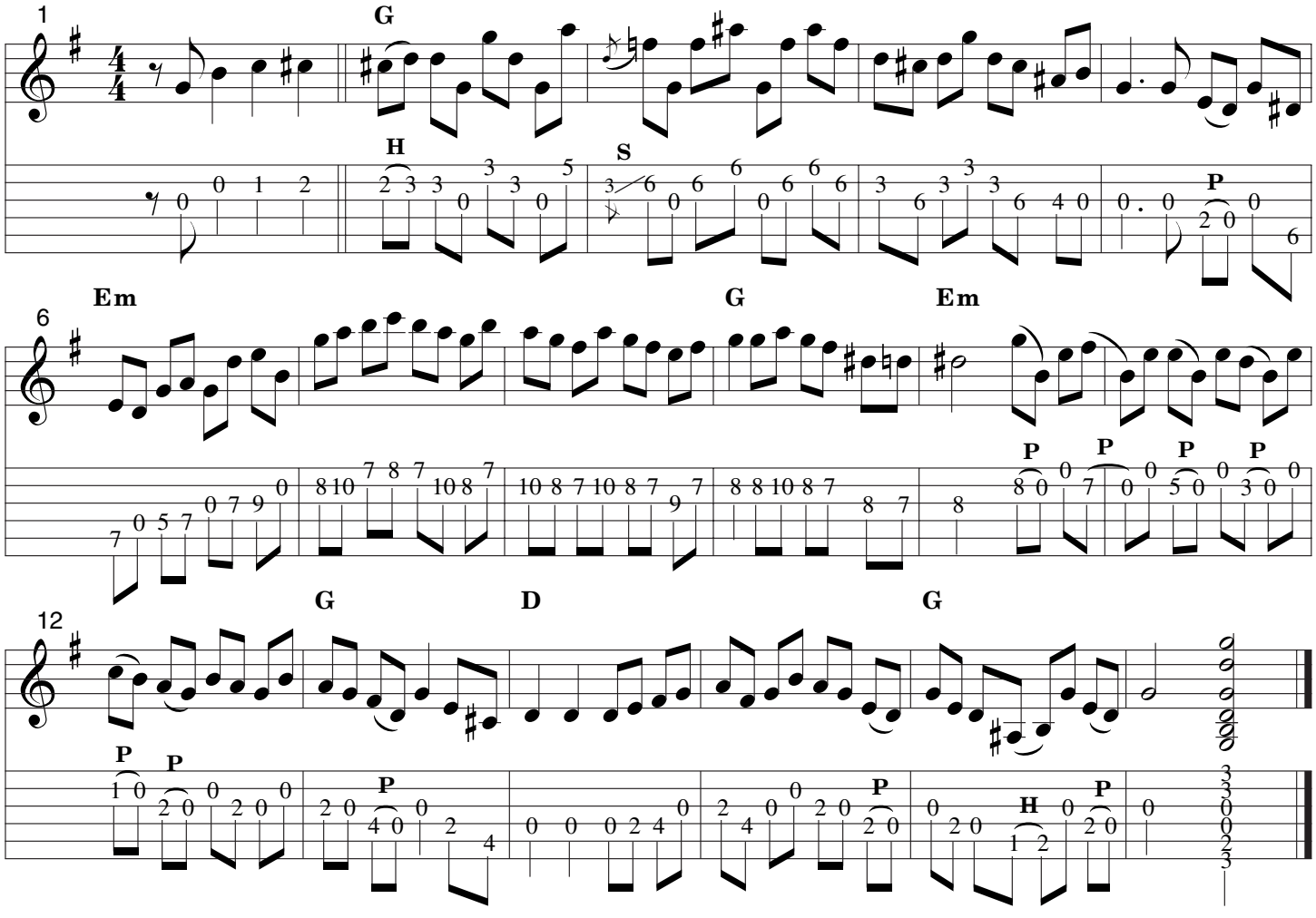
By Brad Davis

INSPIRERED BY JOHN

By John, I'm referring to John Jorgenson, who is well-known by Telecaster, flattop and mandolin enthusiasts the world over. I have the honor of picking with this monster on tour in the Earl Scruggs Family and Friends Band. John has the expertise to capture the drive, soul and fire of a song mirroring the original writer's intent. Though this is a very tough thing to do, he not only captures this feel, but somehow paints his own style within the tune while never jeopardizing the original masterpiece. It's one thing to mimic someone or just play your own style, but it's very difficult to manage both and at an incredible rate of speed no doubt! I felt it appropriate to tab a version of Earl's very own "Foggy Mountain Breakdown." On any given show John switches from Telecaster, mandolin or flattop when picking this fast tune. No matter what instrument he plays, he inspires everyone on that stage, including Earl. So I have tabbed out the product of this inspiration that John creates in me when I hear him pick this wonderful masterpiece! This is not meant to be an exact John Jorgenson solo. It's merely the inspiration created by John. I hope you enjoy it. Have fun and get inspired!

Foggy Mountain Breakdown

Arranged by Brad Davis



Break Time

by Chris Jones

Medium Tempo Ideas

Many guitar players who have learned to generate some right hand speed find that it's easier to play a fast break than to play something at a medium tempo. There's nothing surprising about that; medium tempos have more space between the notes, leaving more room for timing errors. It also gives you more time to think, which, speaking for myself, is not always a good thing. If a tune is fast enough, your brain simply goes into autopilot, regurgitating notes from your lick arsenal, while you stare blankly at your right hand (or dreamily into the distance), marveling at what you're doing and counting the seconds until the fiddle takes over. There's something strangely comfortable about that, versus your brain saying, "Okay, now what's the melody doing? Should I play this lick here? Did I just play that in the last song? Should I go up the neck here? Did I leave the stove on at home? I think my capo's on the wrong fret!"

The big question with the medium break always is, "What do I do with all that space?" The run of eighth notes has its place, but a whole medium break full of them sounds, to put it politely, not good.

To demonstrate some medium tempo ideas in the key of C, I've written out a break to the murder ballad classic, "Banks of the Ohio" (Note: many of these ideas will work just as well in songs in which no one gets killed.) This break makes use of 3 techniques that are invaluable for playing at medium tempos: the Carter Family-style bass and strum, double stops, and (last but not least), crosspicking.

I really haven't written much about crosspicking in previous columns. Perhaps it's because I didn't want to wade into the whole "down-down-up, down-up-down, down-down-down, down-up-up" discussion, and can you blame me? However, the fact is that crosspicking is a very important medium tempo tool, one that I personally use a lot.

The kind of pick direction you use in your crosspicking roll is not important to me at the moment (whew!), but I will point out that this break contains a forward and a backward roll, which is why they sound different if you're listening to the break on the CD. The forward roll comes first (over the G chord), and the backward roll (i.e. a 3-2-1 pattern) follows, over the C and then the F chords.

Just as useful in a break like this is the good old Wildwood Flower-esque bass-strum combination, which I employ heavily in the first part of this break. Think of this as bridging the gap between playing lead and rhythm. When doing this, always make sure that the bass melody notes are played clearly and in time.

I also use double-stops (fiddle-talk for two strings sounded together), either on their own, or played in combination with the strums. Either way, they add fullness and interest to the melody notes. Playing double-stops accurately is more difficult than it seems, so don't feel discouraged if it doesn't come naturally to you. Here again, always strike these double-stops with clarity and tone. The two notes should also be attacked quickly and firmly so they sound like one note (otherwise the second note of the double stop may just sound like an extra note you hit by accident—never a good thing).

Finally, I do throw some eighth-note runs in, but by the time they happen they've been nicely set up by the techniques mentioned above.

Enjoy "Banks of the Ohio," but remember: It's just a song. Please don't ever throw anyone into a river just because he/she is not interested in marrying you.

Visit Chris at: www.nightdrivers.com

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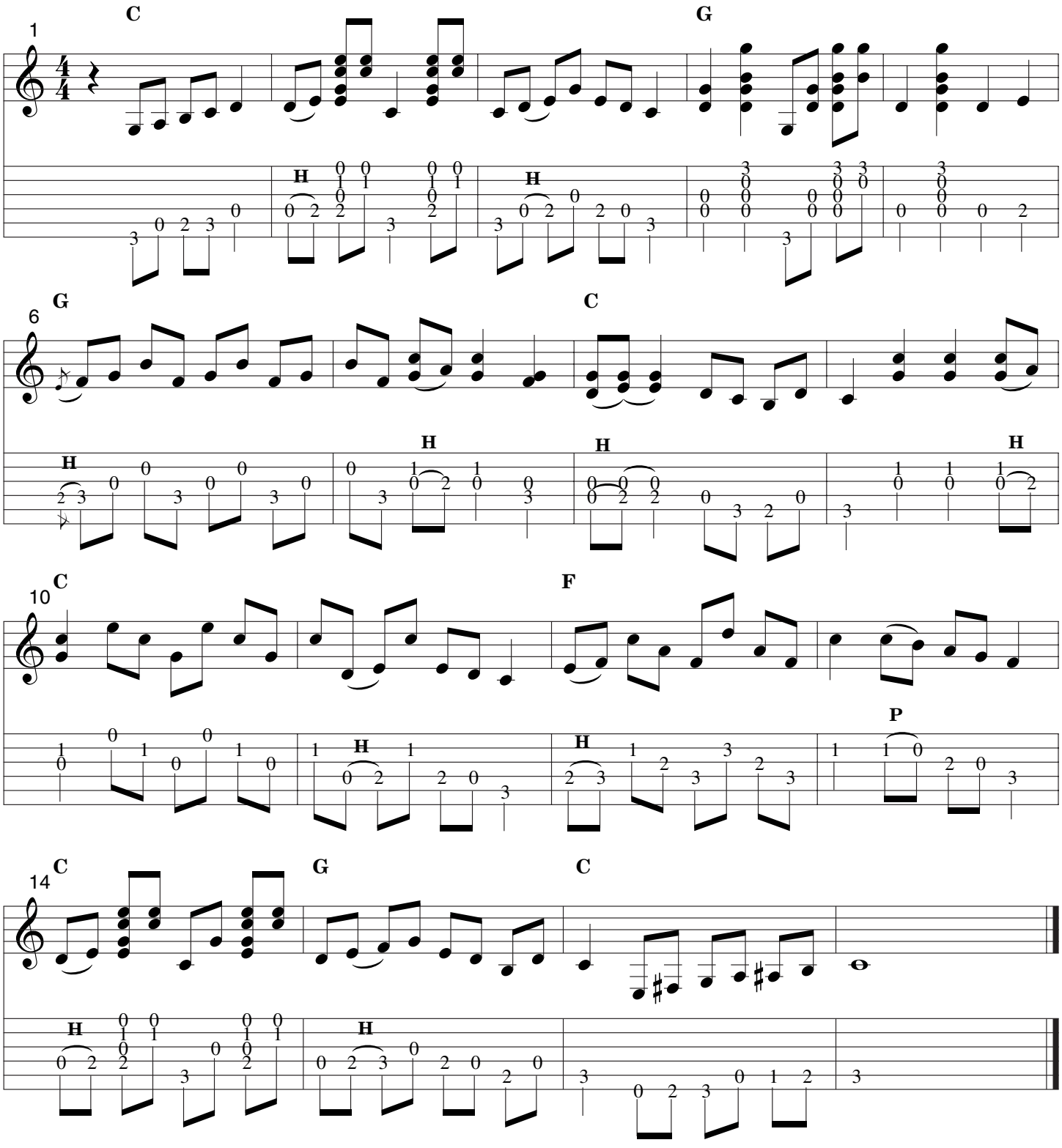
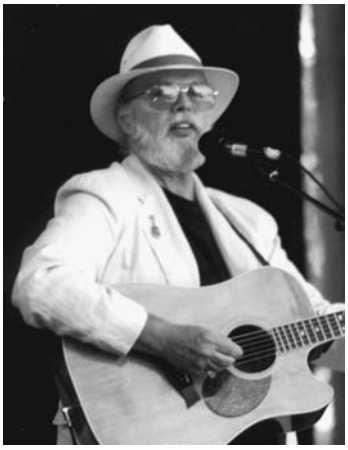
Banks of the Ohio

Arranged by Chris Jones

The Solo Flatpicker

by Dan Crary



Between the Lines in G

Welcome back to our solo flatpicking column, aimed at the issues and challenges facing those of us who play alone. It can be a lonely spot, and the challenges of solid rhythm, smooth continuity, and also keeping it interesting, are not easily solved.

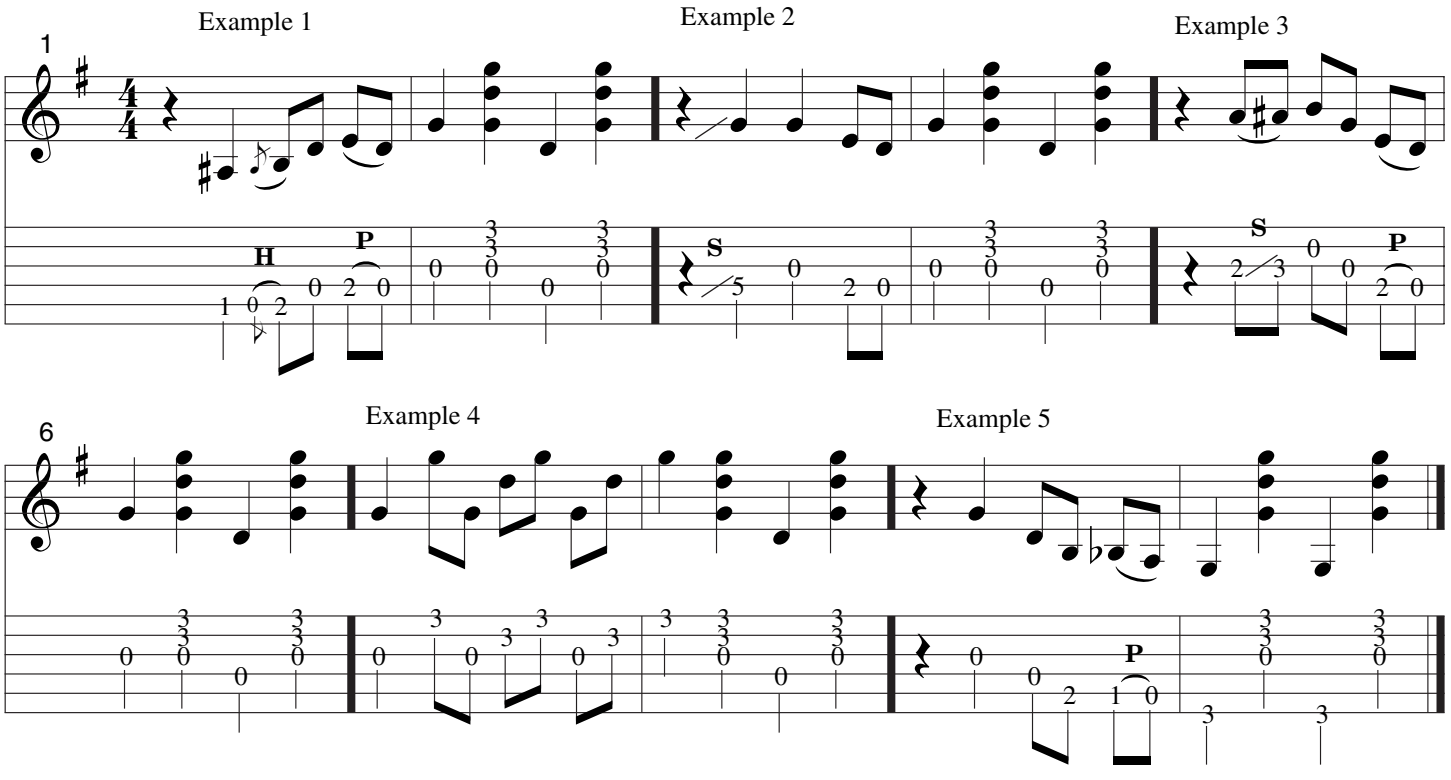
One of the biggest problems is trying to insert runs and other figures that add interest and seasoning to a piece of music, without getting too far out there from the backup. So this time we look at what to do "between the lines" in G; that is, what we can quickly insert between phrases of a song to add interest, maybe even show off a little, and then get right back to a solid rhythm.

I'd suggest that you practice each of these by playing a few measures of straight rhythm before each one, then play the run, then go back to the chords as in the measure following the run in each tab. Then if you've found one or two that you like, memorize them, and work your way to where you can move out of the rhythm into the run and back out again very smoothly. Then you're ready to try these in a moderate tempo song that you sing in G or one of the G-shaped chords reachable by a capo. Try them first with a familiar song so you're not fighting multiple issues at one time. The goal is to be able to play the run smoothly and seamlessly without affecting the continuity and tempo of the piece.

A couple of points to conclude: First, if you're one of those players who's just messing around on the guitar, one way to make some significant progress is to learn some songs, then both sing and play them with some of these ideas for ornamentation. There's a discipline about playing and singing, polishing up some memorized material, and then performing it for people, wherever you can find an audience. Don't be shy—it'll put some backbone and direction in your playing, and people who play music for others are doing something important, pleasant, beautiful, and also ethical for folks around them.

And secondly, these runs are not tie-breakers; you can figure out better ones yourself by using these as a template. Any melodic or catchy little phrase that fits in one measure can do the trick. A run you figured out, memorized, and rehearsed in the middle of rhythm measures will sound good and improve your playing.

Next time we'll... well, I haven't decided about next time, but it'll be good, I promise, and it'll be focused on advancing your skills as a guitar player of the solo persuasion. In the meantime, please visit my website at www.dancrary.com, and let me know how the quest for those short runs "between the lines" works out. Cheers....



JAM TUNES

"Nine Pound Hammer" with David Grier, Kenny Smith, and Wyatt Rice

In February of 2002 *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* hosted a weekend workshop and concert event featuring David Grier, Wyatt Rice, and Kenny Smith. The concert portion of the weekend program was filmed for eventual release on video and DVD. During the concert Kenny, David, and Wyatt played tunes together, Kenny and David both played some tunes solo, Wyatt played a few with Kenny and they were joined by Kenny's wife Amanda, Wyatt and David played together, and Kenny and David played some tunes as a duo. It was a wonderful evening of music and we used two cameras to film the show so that we could edit in a lot of close-ups of their hands in action.

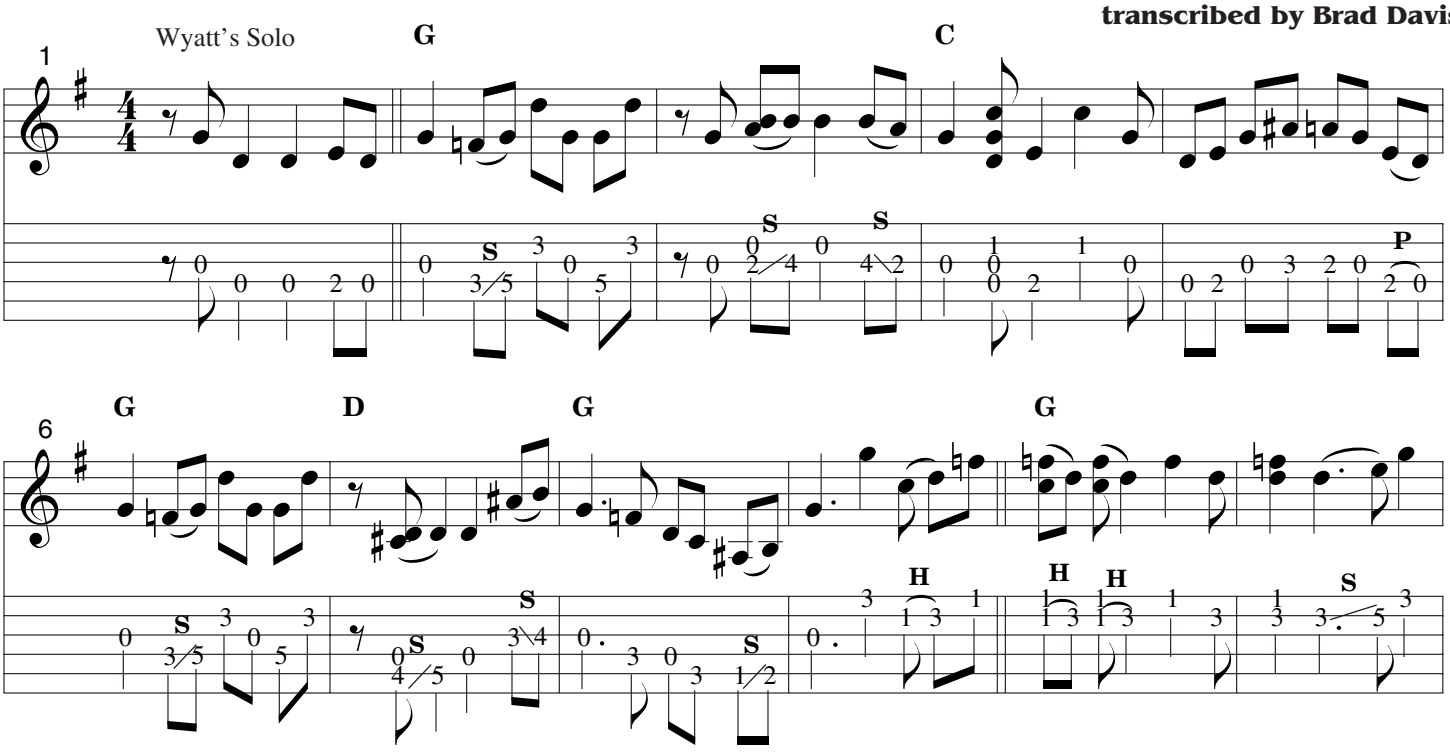
Currently we are mixing the audio tracks and editing the video footage. We hope to have this performance available on both video tape and DVD by the 1st of November of this year.

In order to give *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* readers a short preview of the event, we have included a cut of "Nine Pound Hammer" taken from the show on the audio companion to this issue and transcribed some of the solos below and on the two pages which follow. Kenny, Wyatt, and David all play on this tune. Since "Nine Pound Hammer" is a great jam tune, we thought the "Jam Tunes" column would be a good place to present it.

Wyatt kicks off this tune and sings both verse and chorus. Kenny takes the next solo, Wyatt sings again, and then David takes his first solo. After Wyatt sings the third verse and chorus Wyatt, Kenny, and David continue to swap solos. You can hear the entire cut the audio CD companion to this issue. What we have transcribed for this issue is the first part of Wyatt's, Kenny's, and David's first solos. We would have loved to have been able to transcribe every note, but our space in this issue was limited.

If you like this cut and want to get the visual on this song, as well as many others, give us a call (800-413-8296) and order this great performance video and/or DVD.

Nine Pound Hammer

transcribed by Brad Davis

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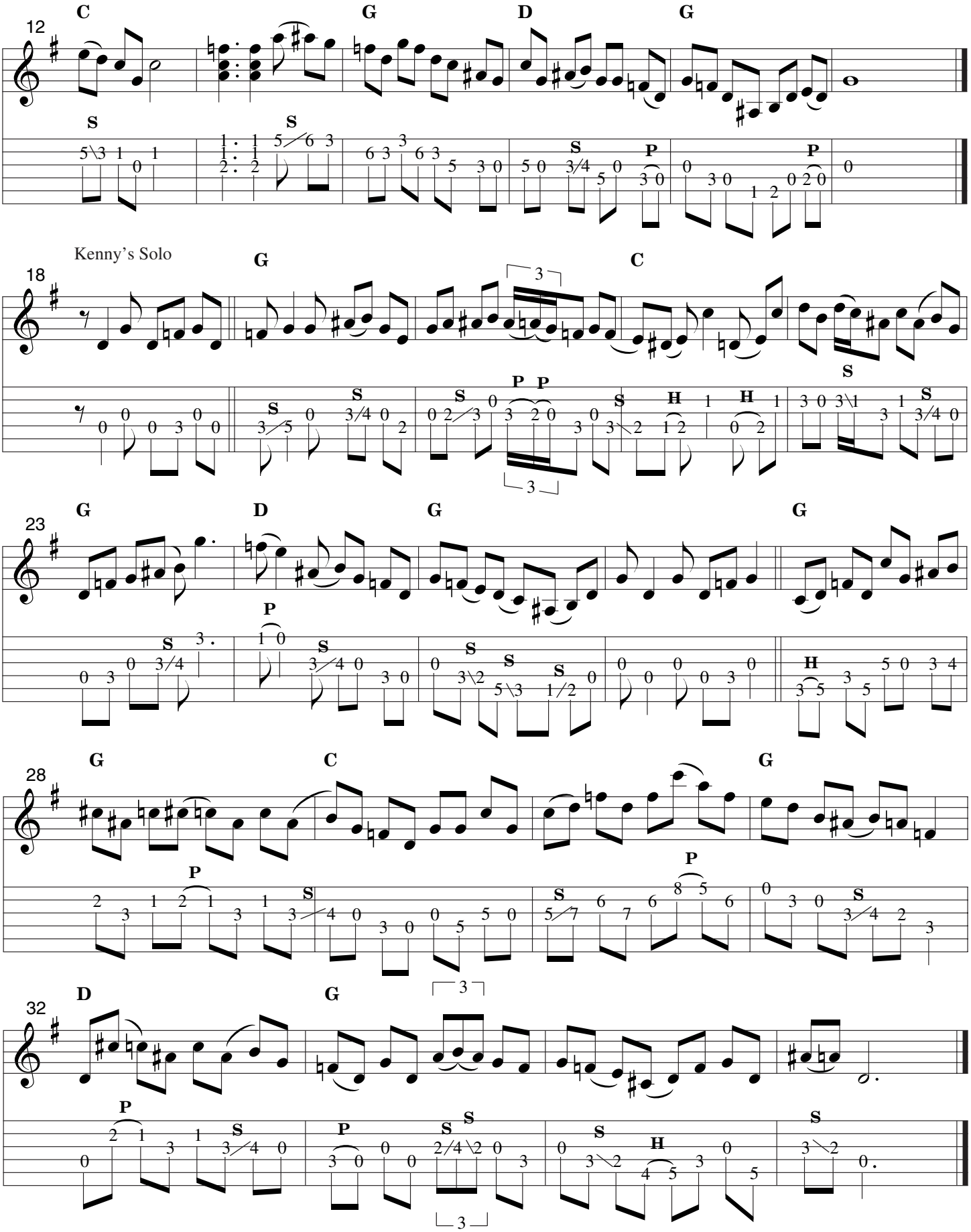
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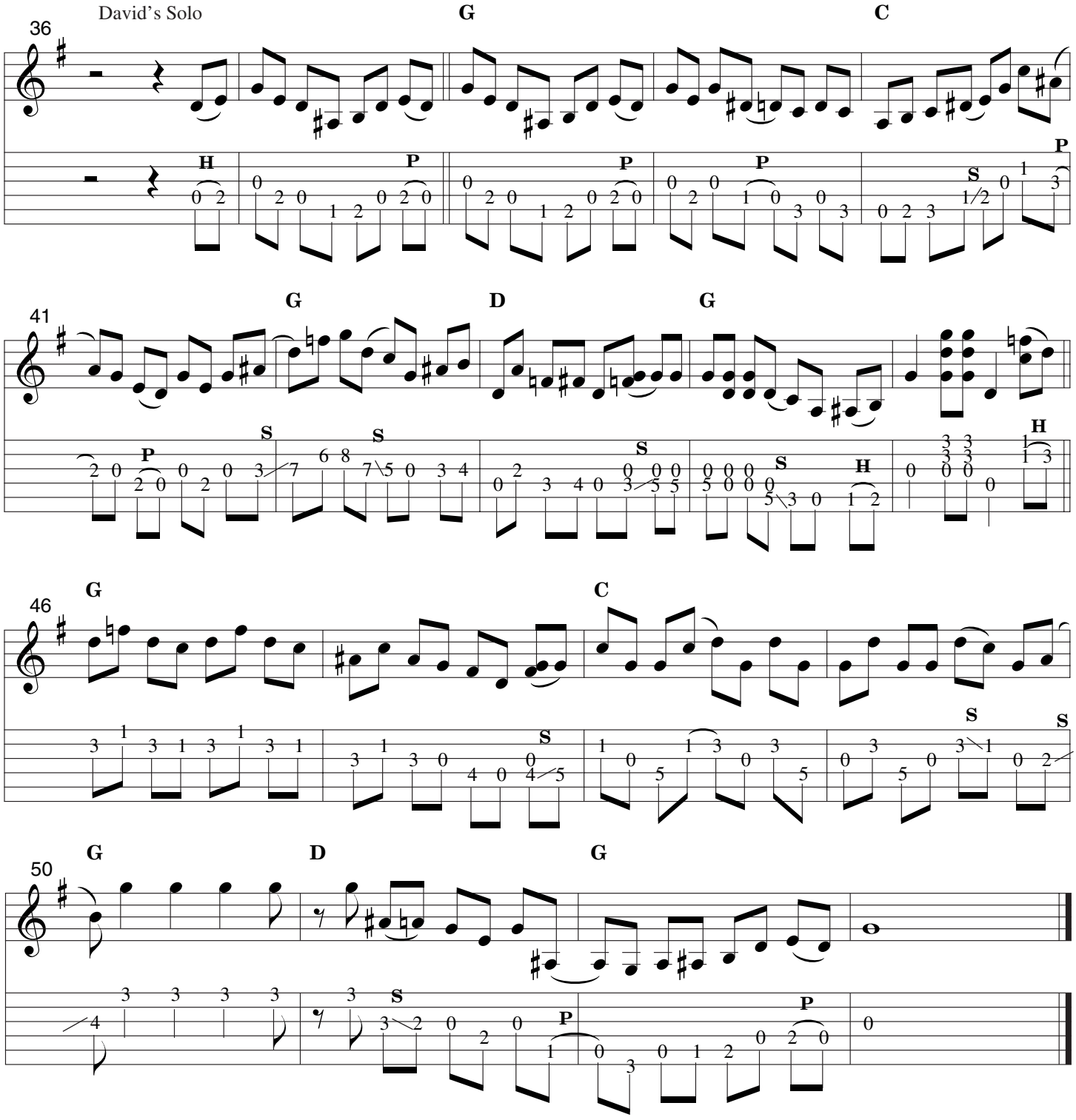
Jim Hurst

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Gypsy Jazz Guitar

by Paul Mehling

Fun with Chromatics

This month we take you to the end of the universe to complete the realm of scales. You know your major and minor scales. Hopefully you've got a grasp on every-other-note-in-a-scale (arpeggios) and maybe some others, but there is nothing quite like the chromatic scale: it provides every note between an octave.

On the guitar's 8th fret on the low E string is a C note. Put your first finger there, then put your fingers down one at a time, one finger per fret. It couldn't be easier: you have C,C#,D,D#. Now, jump back a fret (towards the tuners—that's "down") and do the same thing on the A string at the 7th fret starting on the note E.

E,F,F#,G= fingers 1,2,3,4. Got it? Now same thing on the D string at the 6th fret note G#. Are you seeing the pattern here? When you get to the note B, slide your finger up one more fret to the note C to complete the scale. (or you can slide the first finger up one fret when you begin the 1,2,3,4 pattern on the D string).

I find this fingering to be the easiest to learn and to execute. You can move this pattern over the entire fretboard to any note. However (as usual), the B string presents a problem which means you should not jump back when you go from the G string to the B string (and back).

For instance, on the G string at the 5th fret, play 1,2,3,4 notes C,C#,D,D#. Now, go to the 5th fret on the B string which should be the note E. Play 1,2,3,4 notes E,F,F#,G. Now jump back a fret onto the 4th fret on the high E string note G#. Play 1,2,3,4 notes G#,A,A#,B and slide up a fret to note C to finish.

Now do that in reverse!

This is a great device to use when you want to heat things up.

Django would use this scale, lightening fast, as a smear or glissando up to some high note above the 12th fret on the high E string.

This can be played as quarter notes (count one-two-three-four) which fits the fingering nicely.

For a challenge, try playing this scale in triplets (count one-two-three, one-two-three).

A common mistake is not giving all the notes equal value. Listen for each note and play slowly until you can really nail all the notes! (This is always true: you'll never be able to play something fast if you can't play it slowly.)

Last of all, a tip: when crossing strings, keep both the 4th finger and first finger down so both notes sound at the same time. This little bit of legato will help with all your scales!

Questions? Send me a note or email!

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THE O-ZONE

by Orrin Star

Lost Indian

"Lost Indian" is an old-time fiddle tune which many flatpickers are bound to think of as "the one that sounds like 'Cherokee Shuffle' " since their A-parts are nearly the same. (And while "Cherokee" has B-part with different chords, "Indian" retains the same progression for both its sections—but it's obvious these tunes have a shared history.)

Recently I've been doing some playing with a superb old-time fiddler here in New York City named Bill Christophersen. He played "Lost Indian" at a practice one afternoon and I recorded it (thinking that I would perhaps work up a banjo part for a banjo/fiddle duet). Repeated listenings piqued my interest in the melodic content of the tune and before long I found myself thinking "hmm—wonder how this would sit on the guitar?"

Well, it sits great. (And its native key of D.) There are some very cool moves here both harmonically (i.e. the double stops) and positionally (i.e. the way you are called on to jump up the neck and then back down again in the B-parts). I take you through the tune two and a half times since there were more variations to the way that the A-part resolved than doing it twice through allowed for.

For the record, this was a real onion of a tune to transcribe/arrange: though the first A-part came quickly, I repeatedly found myself thinking that I had it down only to later realize that there was more to it. Which means that—as with a lot of fine old-time fiddling—this version contains many nuances and variations and also that my ear and melodic thinking were being stretched—always a good thing. It also means that those of you trying to get this from the tab alone have your work cut out for you; hearing to a recording of the tune (on the audio CD) would be advisable.

Bill initially learned "Lost Indian" from a recording by Kentucky fiddler Marion Sumner.

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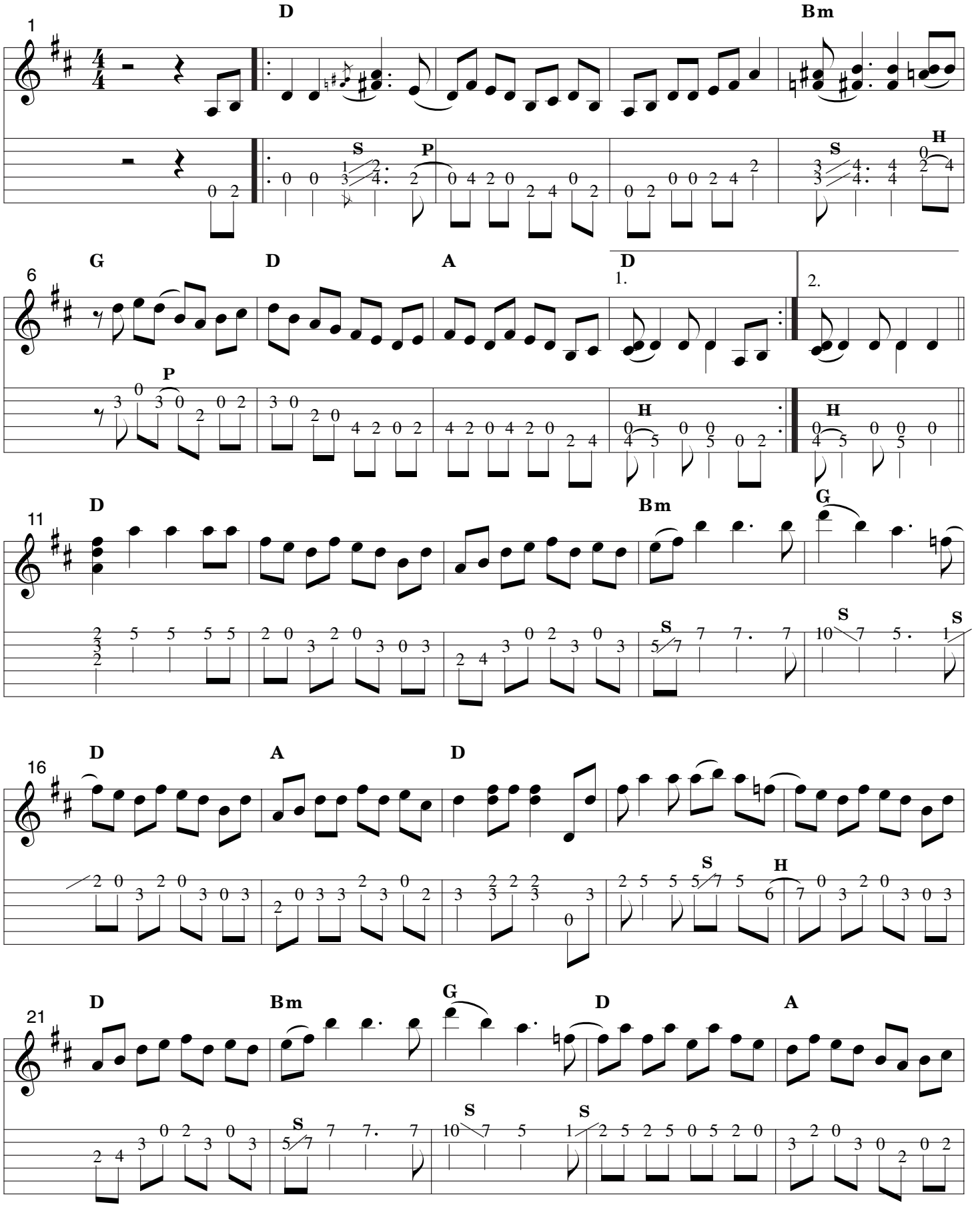
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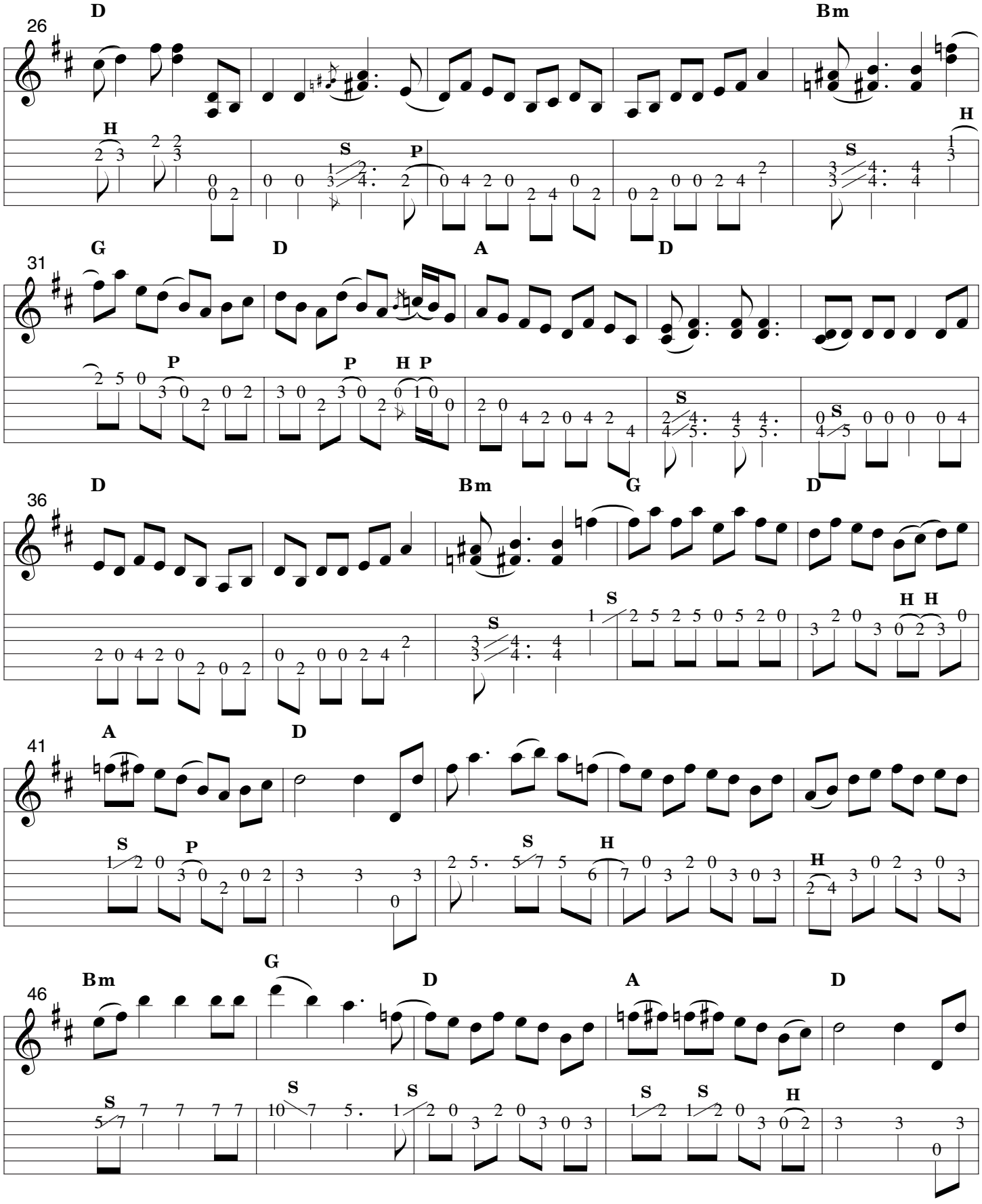
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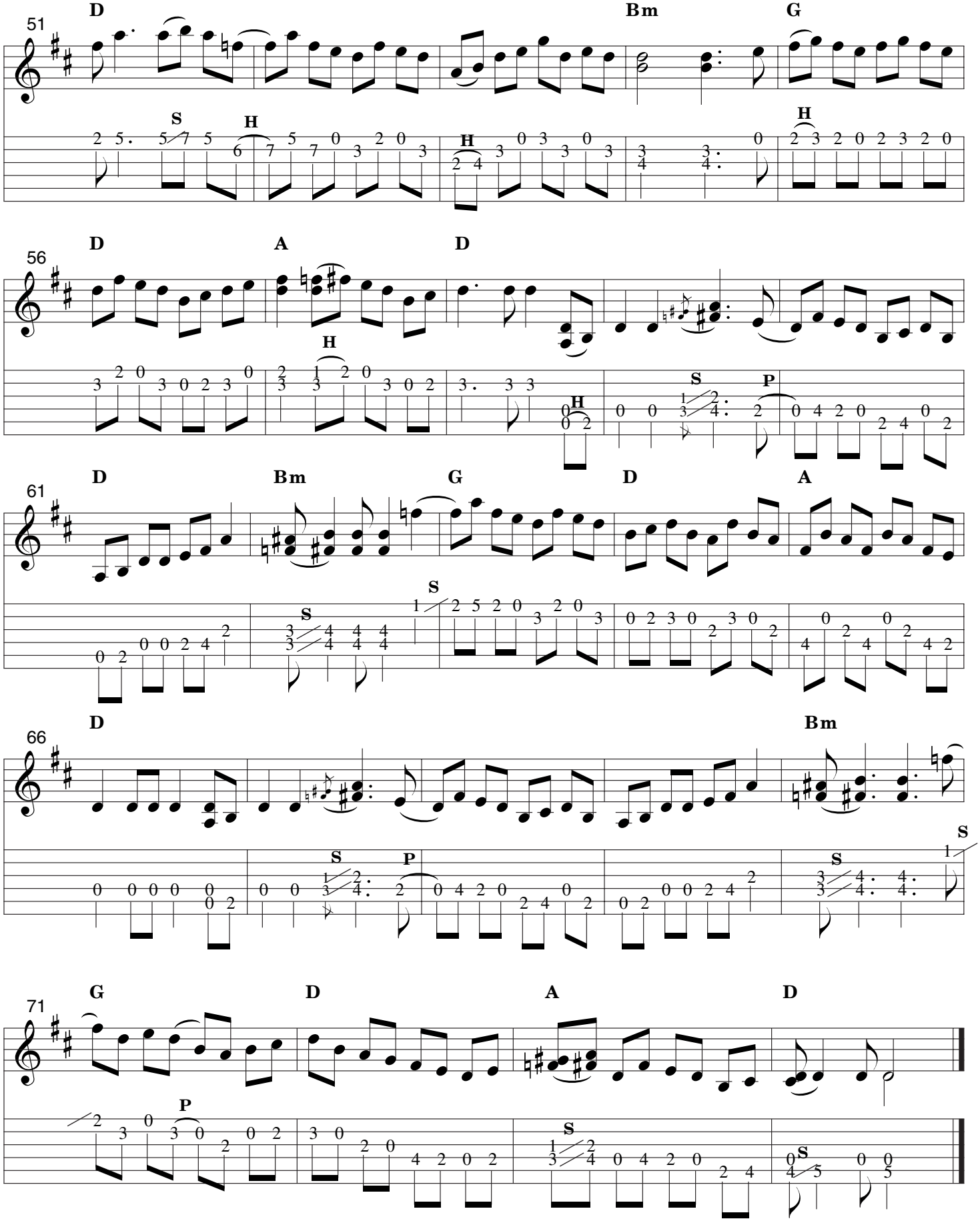

"I Told Them About You"

by Dix Bruce

Jim Nunally and I just released our third CD *In My Beautiful Dream* and about my favorite song on it is our version of "I Told Them All About You." We recorded it with a guitar duet introduction which we repeat for the solo. You'll learn both melody and harmony in this column.

Jim learned the song from a medley on an old Wilburn Brothers LP. He'd sung it for years and when I first heard him perform it, I was sold on the song's possibilities for our duo. I'd also heard it on David Grisman and Doc Watson's *Doc and Dawg* CD.

Jim and I had a great time working out the singing and the guitar duet and it turned out to be one of those songs that just fell together naturally and almost instantly. We started playing it in concert and found that its light-hearted and innocent message of first love really connected with audiences. There was one problem: it lasted under a minute and a half. We searched for other sources that might reveal a second verse and got nowhere until I saw the title on an old sheet music list. On a lark (it might have been a whippoorwill or a turtle dove, I'm not sure) I ordered the music.

I was pleasantly surprised to find out that it was basically our song based on the Wilburn Brothers version, with several melodic and lyric changes. The surprise was that what we knew as "I Told Them All About You" was just the chorus to a 1927 song by Cliff Friend. Friend was the prolific Tin Pan Alley composer who wrote or co-wrote the Hank Williams hit (and a 1930s hit for Emmett Miller), "Lovesick Blues"; Bill Boyd and the Cowboy Ramblers' "Wah Hoo!"; the standards "When My Dream Boat Comes Home," "Love is Good for Anything That Ails You," "There's Yes Yes in Your Eyes," "Melancholy," and "It Goes Like This That Funny Melody"; and the Looney Tunes theme "The Merry-Go-Round Broke Down." So there was no more to it and we were stuck with a very short song.

Came time for the recording session and we cut "I Told Them All About You." I was happy with the sound, but its length bothered me. I called Jim up and told him my concerns and he said, "Don't worry about, it's fine the way it is. It's done." Do you ever have that experience of being 95% happy with something but 5% of it sticks in your craw? Well, that's what happened here and I couldn't seem to get my craw unstuck. So, I called Jim again and expressed my worries once more and he was less than his usual "patience of Job" self. "It's done Dix, we don't have a second verse and I don't want to record it again!" I said, "How about if I write another verse to it?" Jim said, "Go ahead and try if you want, but it's done!"

I sat down and wrote some lyrics, which came pretty quickly, and sang them for Jim. We discussed them and he thought they weren't "too bad." We crossed some ideas out, discussed a few more, then one or both of us came up with the cartoon image of birds flying around a character's head both when he falls in love or when he gets smacked with a two by four. That image stuck in my brain and a few minutes later I had "Love birds singing love songs around me every day/ I'm gonna ask the preacher if he'll marry us in May."

The only other suggestion Jim offered was that he wanted the month to be June and not May since more people get married in June. He thought it would lead to vast riches for us as couples picked "I Told Them All About You" as their wedding song. (That boy is always thinking. Keep your eye on him, he will be rich one day.) I tried and tried and nothing would come for June. So we left it as May and began easing the new set of lyrics into our version of the song. It worked for us, just like the rest of the tune. After we'd rehearsed it a few times, Jim graciously agreed to re-cut it and the rest, as they say, is history! Of course, just after the new CD was pressed, a "June" line popped into my head. I hope you'll sing the song and plug in the lyric: "Love birds singing love songs about a honeymoon/I'm gonna ask the preacher if he'll marry us in June."

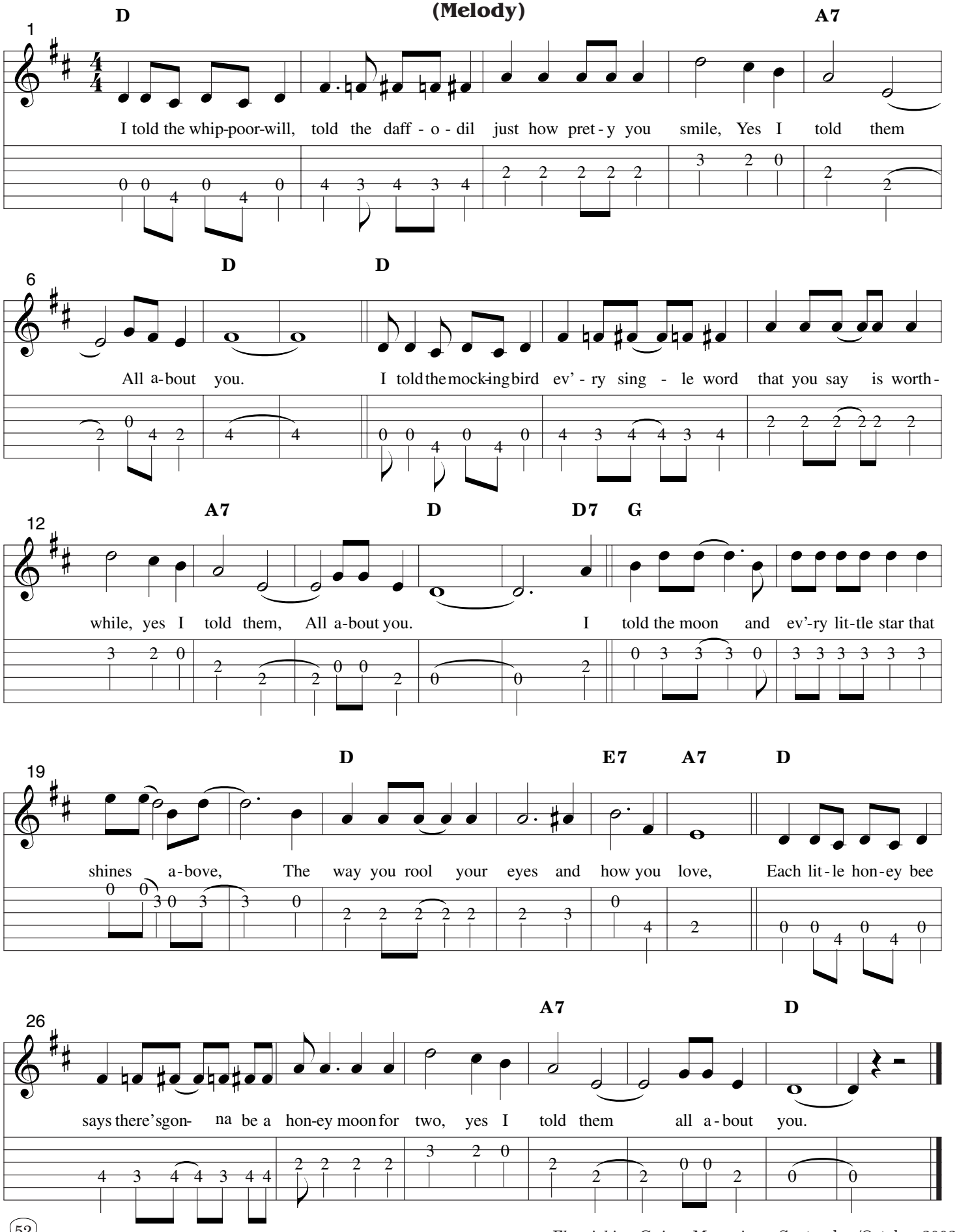
We perform the song in the key of D and the duet/solo is pretty straight forward and simple. Jim plays the melody and I play the harmony. As I was transcribing our parts for this column, I discovered that Jim was playing something slightly different than I thought he was. My movement between notes in several phrases was chromatic, A to G# natural, against his whole note F# to E. That combination makes for some different harmonies. Since we don't have a rhythm guitarist playing a D chord underneath our parts, it's not a problem. When we do the big band version of "I Told Them All About You" one of us will have to yell "Uncle!" and change his part.

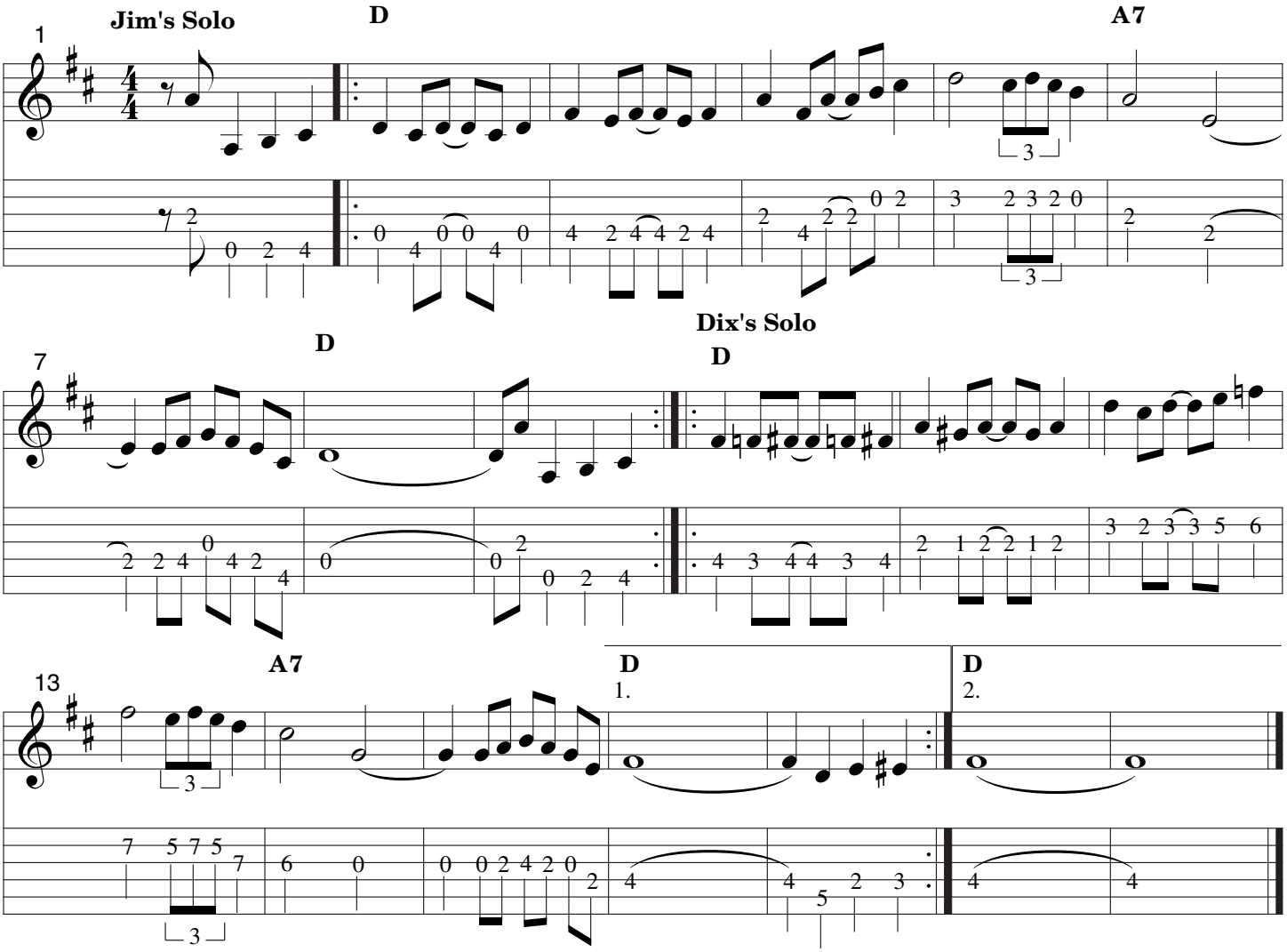
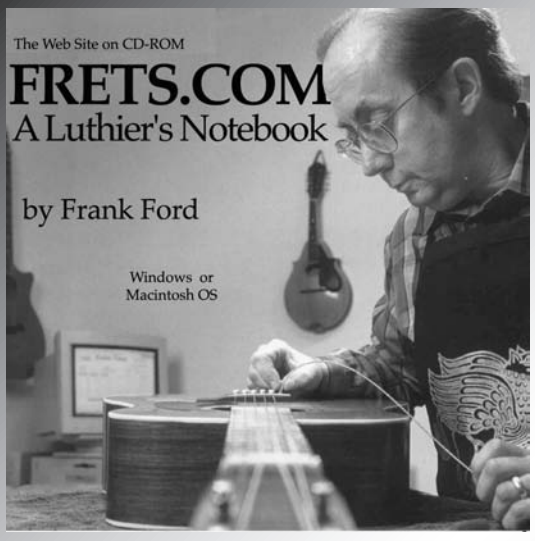
On the accompanying *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* CD, you'll hear the parts at both slow and regular speeds. I excerpted our recording for the regular speed so you can hear exactly how we play it. You can also hear a sound clip of the track, and several others from the new release, on the CDs page of my website: musixnow.com. It's a good song. Have fun with it!

Dix Bruce and Jim Nunally's new CD In My Beautiful Dream *is available from Musix - PO Box 231005, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523 - TOLL FREE: 1-877-219-0441 (9AM to 5 PM Pacific time M-F only, please) www.musixnow.com Dix's newest book/CD set is* BackUP TRAX: Basic Blues for Guitar. *Students learn by playing along with the recorded band. You play all the solos.*

I Told Them About You

(Melody)

Transcribed by Dix Bruce

D
A7
1
I told the whip-poor-will, told the daff - o - dil just how pret - y you smile, Yes I told them
D
D
6
All a-bout you. I told the mock-ing bird ev' - ry sing - le word that you say is worth -
A7
D
D7
G
12
while, yes I told them, All a-bout you. I told the moon and ev'-ry lit-tle star that
D
E7
A7
D
19
shines a-bove, The way you rool your eyes and how you love, Each lit-le hon-ey bee
A7
D
26
says there's gon- na be a hon-ey moon for two, yes I told them all a-bout you.

I Told Them All About You
(Intro and Solo)



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by Michel A. Maddux

Three Places for Each Form

In the last issue I presented simple chord forms and exercises using only the top three strings on the guitar. For this issue, I want you to continue thinking about using those forms and extend your knowledge by seeing an application of the forms in a new tune.

In the last issue, we covered the "D" and "F" shape forms; these are the forms which use the first position D shape, and the first position "F" shape, moving up and down the neck to play in other keys.

The "C" Form:

The form shown in example 1 is the "C" form. Like other moveable forms for the guitar, the essential element in memorizing and using these forms is that you learn the actual key played when using the form in other positions on the fingerboard.

The "C" form presented in example 1 is named after the top three notes of the C-bar chord.

Play the C-bar chord as shown in measure 1. Next, play the top three notes only as shown in measure 2.

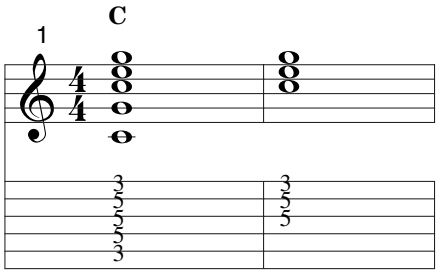
For those readers not familiar with this type of chord, the bar chord is fingered using the index finger to "bar" from the A string to the high E string, using the third finger to play the notes on the 5th fret. When playing with this fingering, omit the top note, the G on the third fret. To play all of the notes shown, use fingers 2,3,4 on the fifth fret.

For the three note form, the top three notes are usually fingered index, 3, 4.

Example I—Analysis and Explanation:

The notes in the first form are C-G-C-E-G (or I-V-I-III-V). The notes in the second form are C-E-G (or I-III-V). Notice that the second form is a root position major triad. In addition, because there are no open strings, the second form can be moved to any position desired, and will be a major triad for different keys. Move the form to 5th position and it is a D major chord, in 7th position an E major, and so on.

Example 1:
C Bar Chord and top three notes of the chord.



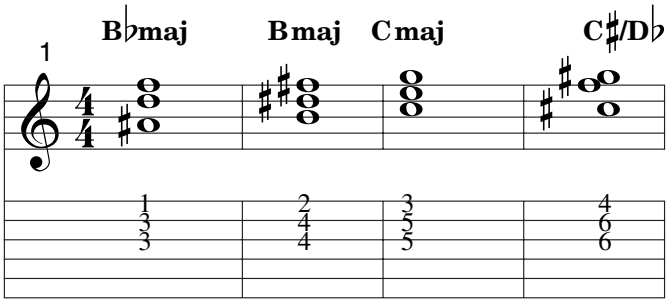
Exercise 1 (below) requires you to practice moving the form up and down the neck chromatically. Practice exercise 1 by playing the chord, and say the name of the chord in each position. Use the two strum chunk, and cross-picking up and down the neck.

Look at the top three notes of the C chord. They are the notes 1-3-5, in order played, of the major chord. The root of the chord, the "C," is found on the G string.

In the last issue we learned to use the minor form, without a complete explanation. Remember that a minor differs from a major form by only one note. In the minor form triad, the notes are I-bIII-V. In this chord form, the middle note is the III, so by dropping it one fret we get the minor chord with the same name as the major, e.g. C becomes C minor.

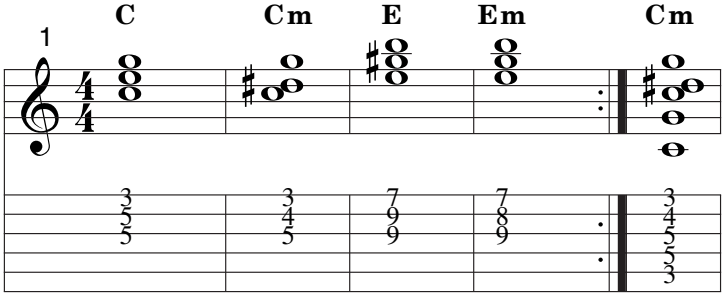
The complete minor chord is the variation of the C bar chord presented below, and is fingered as shown in example 3. Notice that the top three notes are the minor triad in example 2. Compare the minor chord in example 3 with the major chord in example 1. Notice that the major and minor difference is only one note.

Exercise 1:



Example 2:
Major/Minor Chord Forms

Example 3:
C Minor Chord Form



These fairly simple forms open the door to finding the right notes in any key, in any position on the fingerboard. The next example (below) illustrates this point, by using the major and minor forms of a simple I-IV-iv-I-vi-ii-V-I progression. This is the same progression that Mark O'Connor used in his tune, "Pickin' in the Wind." It uses the IV chord, then the minor IV (F minor), followed by the I, A-minor (the relative minor), D-Minor, and ends with V-I.

Great Things Happen in Three's:

Notice that the exercise shows an example of playing the entire chord sequence in three different positions on the fingerboard. Say the name of each chord in each position as you play it to increase your familiarity. This exercise builds upon and uses the chord forms shown in the previous issue, the F and D forms.

I want you to take these forms and find where they occur in other keys for this chord progression. You will note that the forms repeat in a regular rotating pattern for each key. For example, play the sequence using G as the I chord.

Sail Away Ladies:

In the tune presented on the next page, this concept is used to crosspick through the changes, offering a variation on the basic melody. "Sail Away Ladies" is a very pretty tune that uses both the relative minor (the Em), and the secondary relative minor (the Am or minor ii chord) as a substitute for the IV chord—the C.

Experiment with using the different forms to play the changes and make up your own variations.

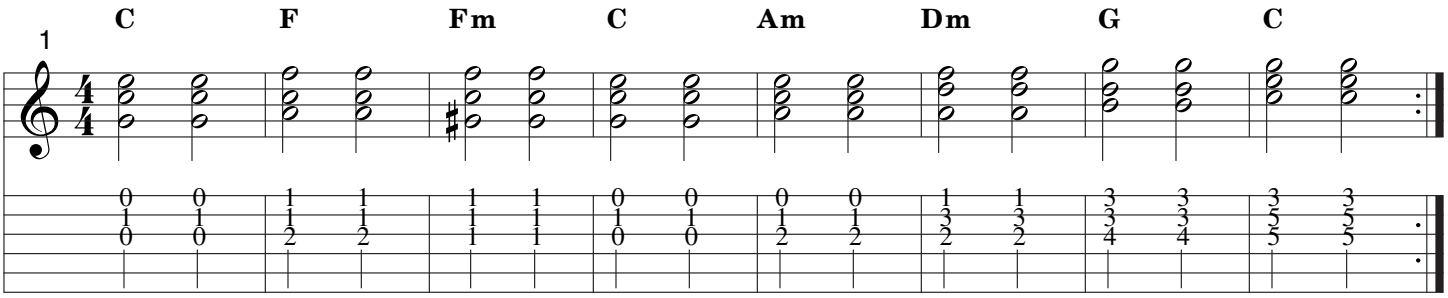
Have fun and keep on pickin!

About the Author:

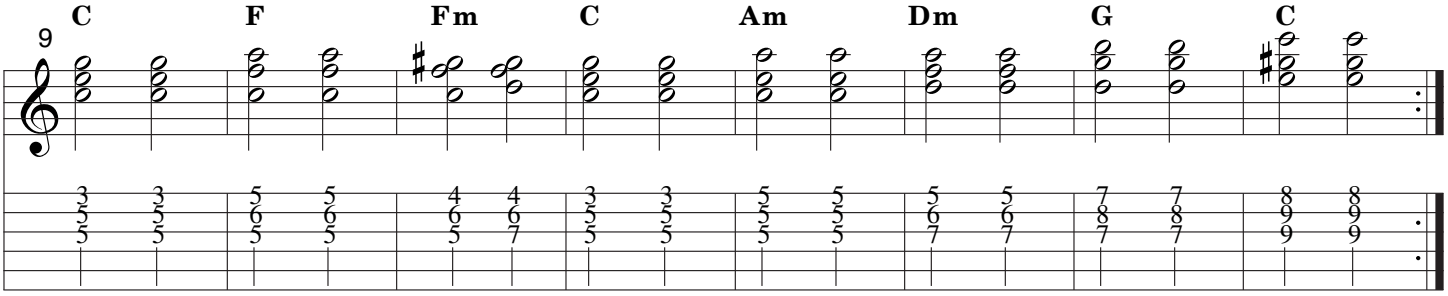
In the '90's, Mike could frequently be found in the final round of flatpickers at the National Flatpicking Championships. He presently performs, writes, and teaches in Colorado Springs and the western United States.

Check the Colorado Springs newspaper listings for the "Bertye Maddux Band". His "Ol Banjo" CD is available through Flatpicking Guitar Magazine. Please contact him with questions or comments c/o this magazine.

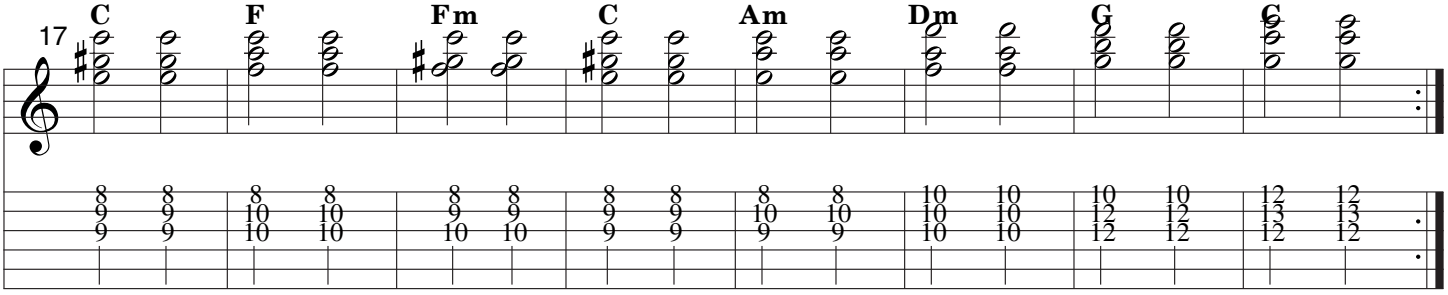
Position I



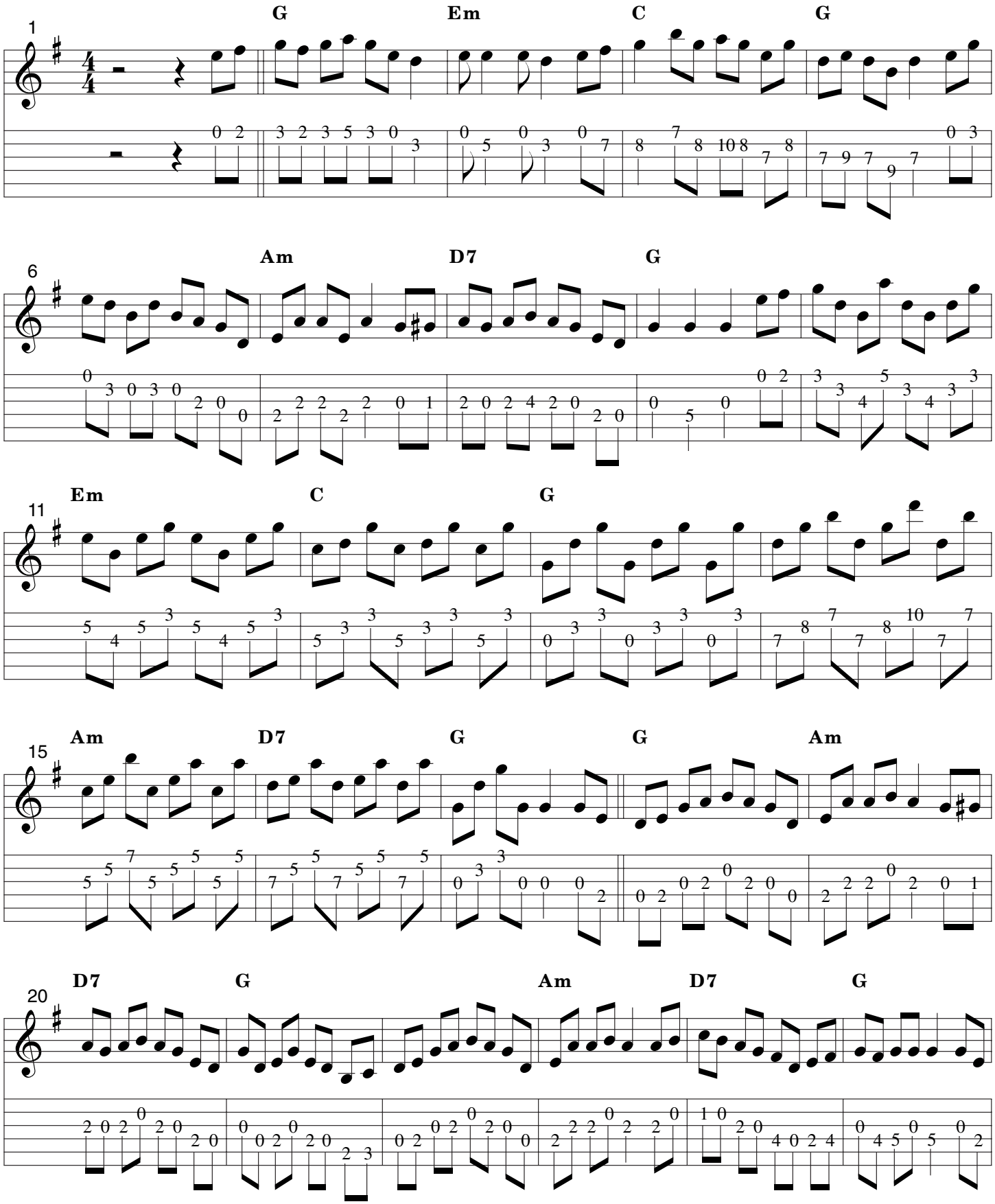
Position III

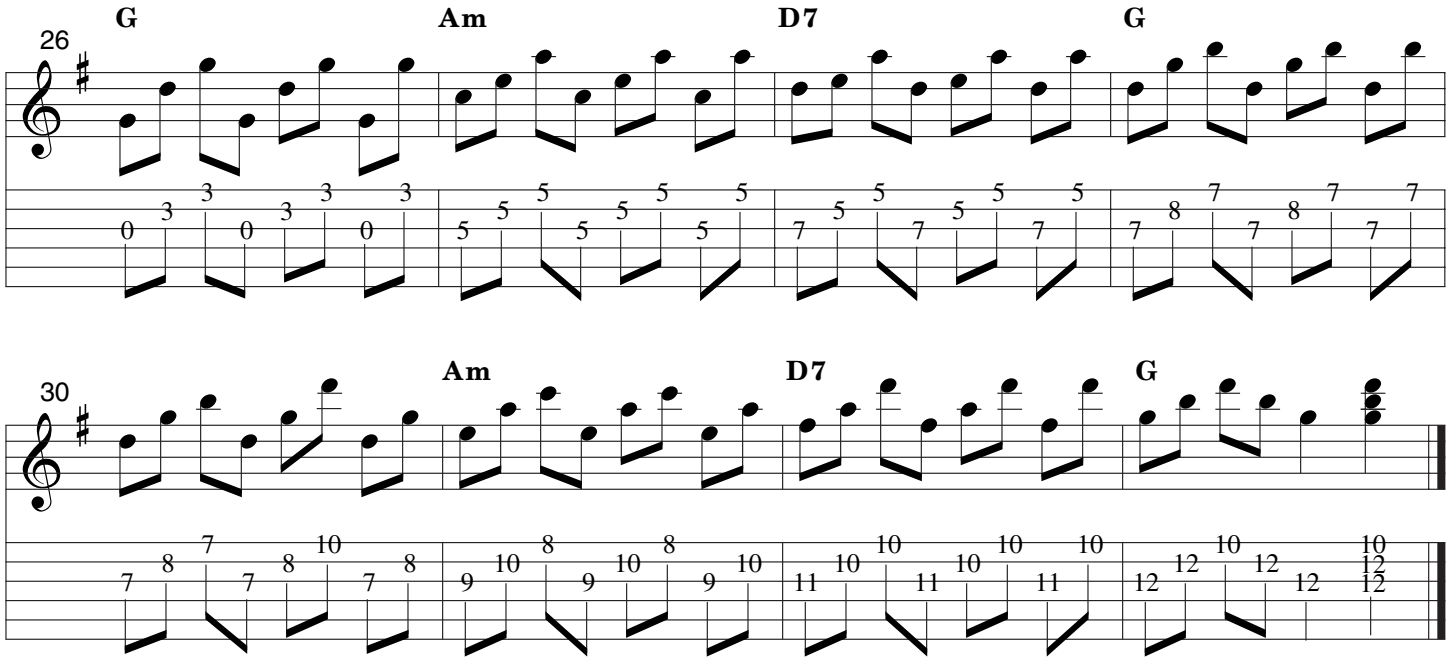


Position VIII



Sail Away Ladies

Arranged by Mike Maddux

Sail Away Ladies (con't)



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Gospel Guitar

with Harold Streeter

Battle Hymn of the Republic

With the exception of "Dixie, Look Away," our beloved "Battle Hymn of the Republic," (otherwise known as "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory"), is by far the most popular song from the Civil War era. I have a couple of reasons for working out an arrangement of it for this column: not only is the "Battle Hymn" included in most hymnals, but one of our readers requested a relatively simple arrangement of it. Hopefully the key of C used here is in keeping with the request.

In my hymnal, lyric writing credits go to Julia W. Howe, who lived from 1819 to 1910; tune credits go to William Steffe, who died in 1911. Also in my hymnal, as it probably is in most, literal timing is shown, a display which consists of lots of dotted and flagged notes. When it comes to hymnals, or any other presentation of the "Battle Hymn" in sheet music form, that's as it should be. However, when it comes to writing an arrangement of the piece in tab form, not only is that stuff hard to read, it's hard to write, even with a tab editor—at least for me.

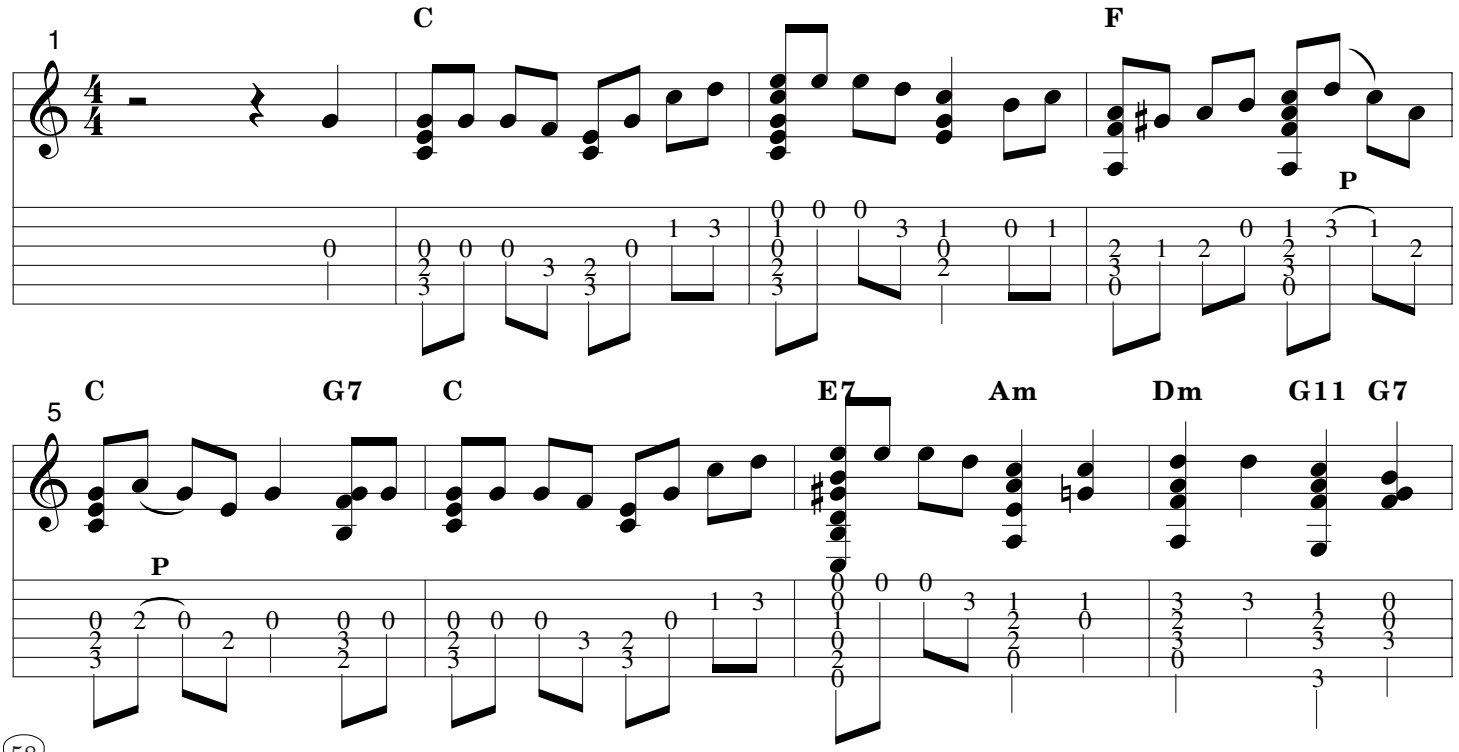
Therefore, in the hope you're familiar enough with the timing cadences of the "Battle Hymn" to hear it in your head, such hair splitting has been omitted in favor of a simpler eighth note-based display. If you're not, the CD for this issue should be of help in regard to the timing eccentricities.

Even though the tab here was proclaimed a "relatively simple" arrangement in the first paragraph, I couldn't resist upping the stakes a bit with a key change to G in order to include a few modern chord voicings. If this section is not of interest, just end on the first note of measure 17. If it is of interest, however, it might be a good idea to spend some extra time with the series of chords beginning in the last part of measure 22, and continuing on through measure 23. The two measures really aren't as daunting as they may appear because the idea is to break tempo and play the remainder of the tab in slow rubato.

I hope you had a great music-filled summer. If you get a moment, please check out our web site at www.lewalt.com <http://www.lewalt.com> .

Battle Hymn of the Republic

Arranged by Harold Streeter



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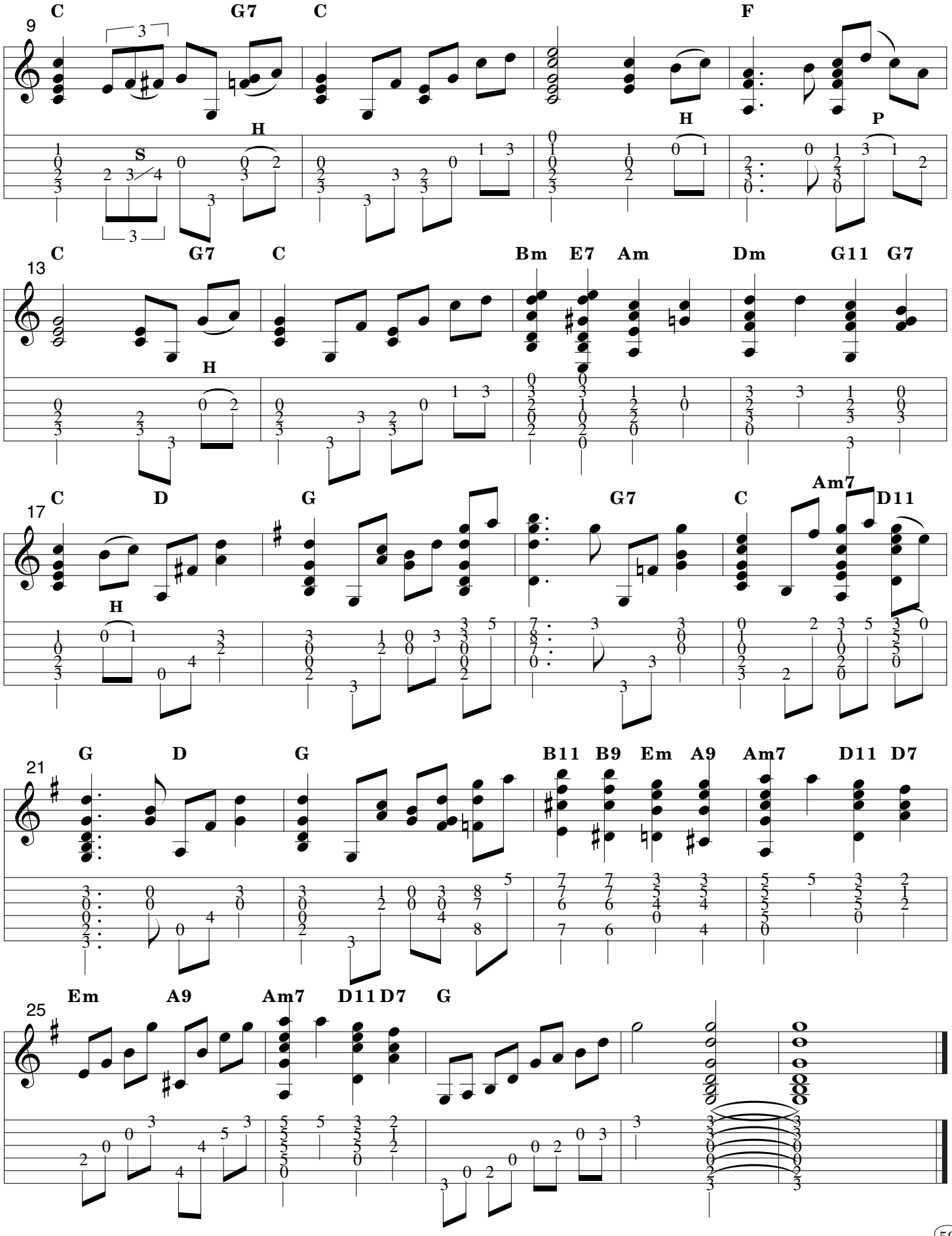
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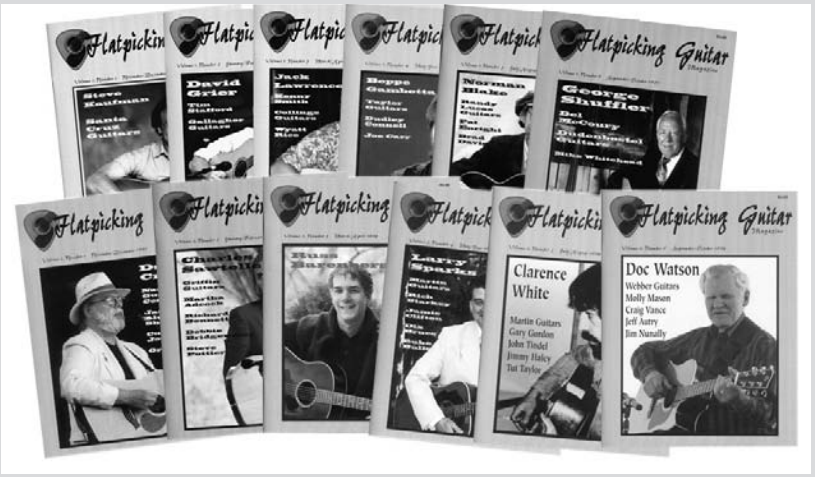
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Flatpicking Gospels

"The Lily of the Valley"

Summer is traditionally "camp meeting time" and in this issue I have included one of my all time favorite camp meeting songs, "The Lily of the Valley." The arrangement is pitched in the key of G and should be played at a moderate tempo with a very pronounced rhythm.

The thing I like about this tune is that it has a very uplifting melody. People automatically tap their feet and clap their hands when this tune is played. Also, it really invites other bluegrass instruments like mandolin, banjo, bass, and fiddle. Try playing this arrangement and then work out your own improvised variations on the melody.

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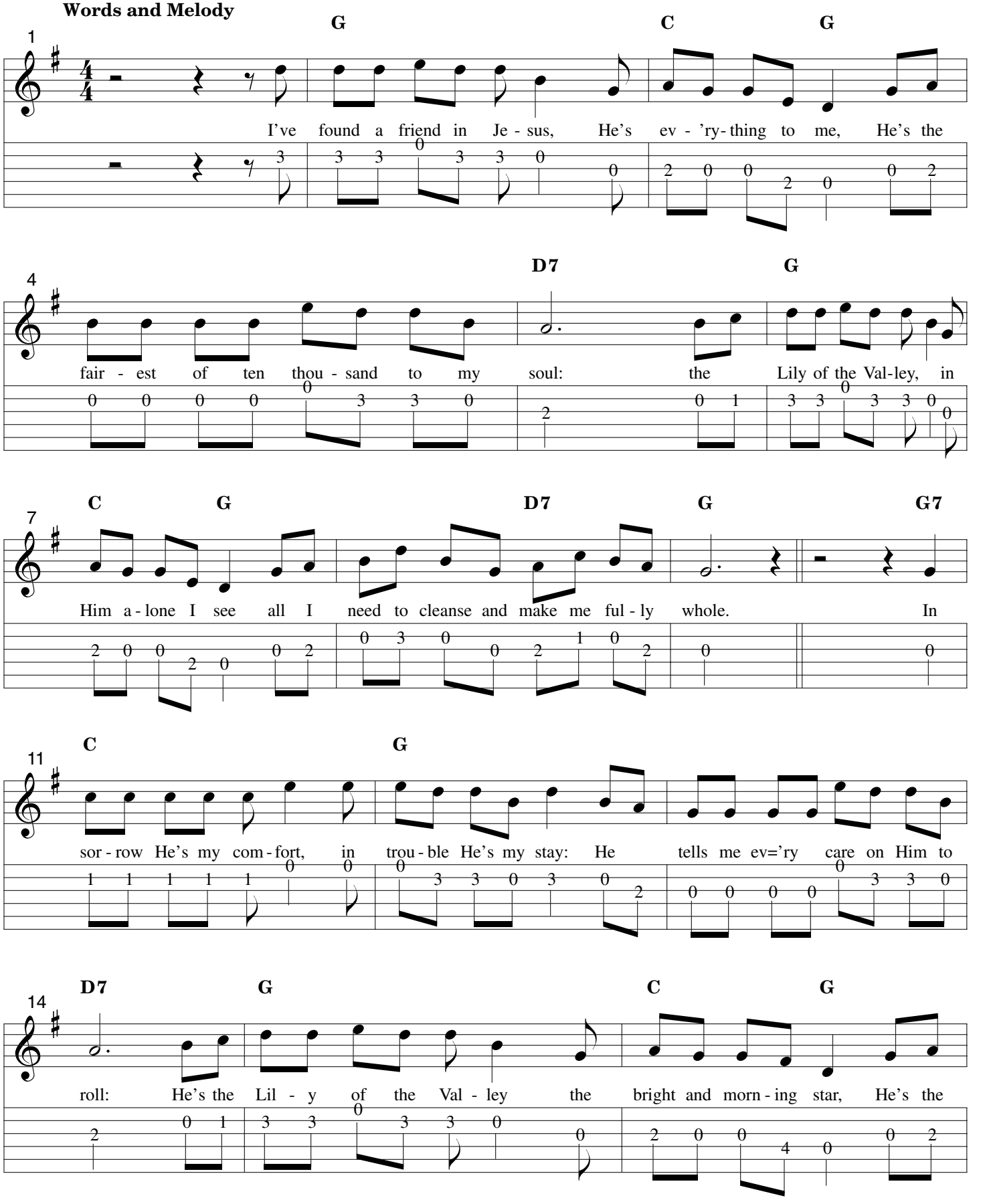
The Lily of the Valley

Arranged by William Bay

Words and Melody

1
G
C
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I've found a friend in Je - sus, He's ev - 'ry - thing to me, He's the
4
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G
fair - est of ten thou - sand to my soul: the Lily of the Val-ley, in
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G7
Him a - lone I see all I need to cleanse and make me ful - ly whole. In
11
C
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sor - row He's my com - fort, in trou - ble He's my stay: He tells me ev='ry care on Him to
14
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roll: He's the Lil - y of the Val - ley the bright and morn - ing star, He's the

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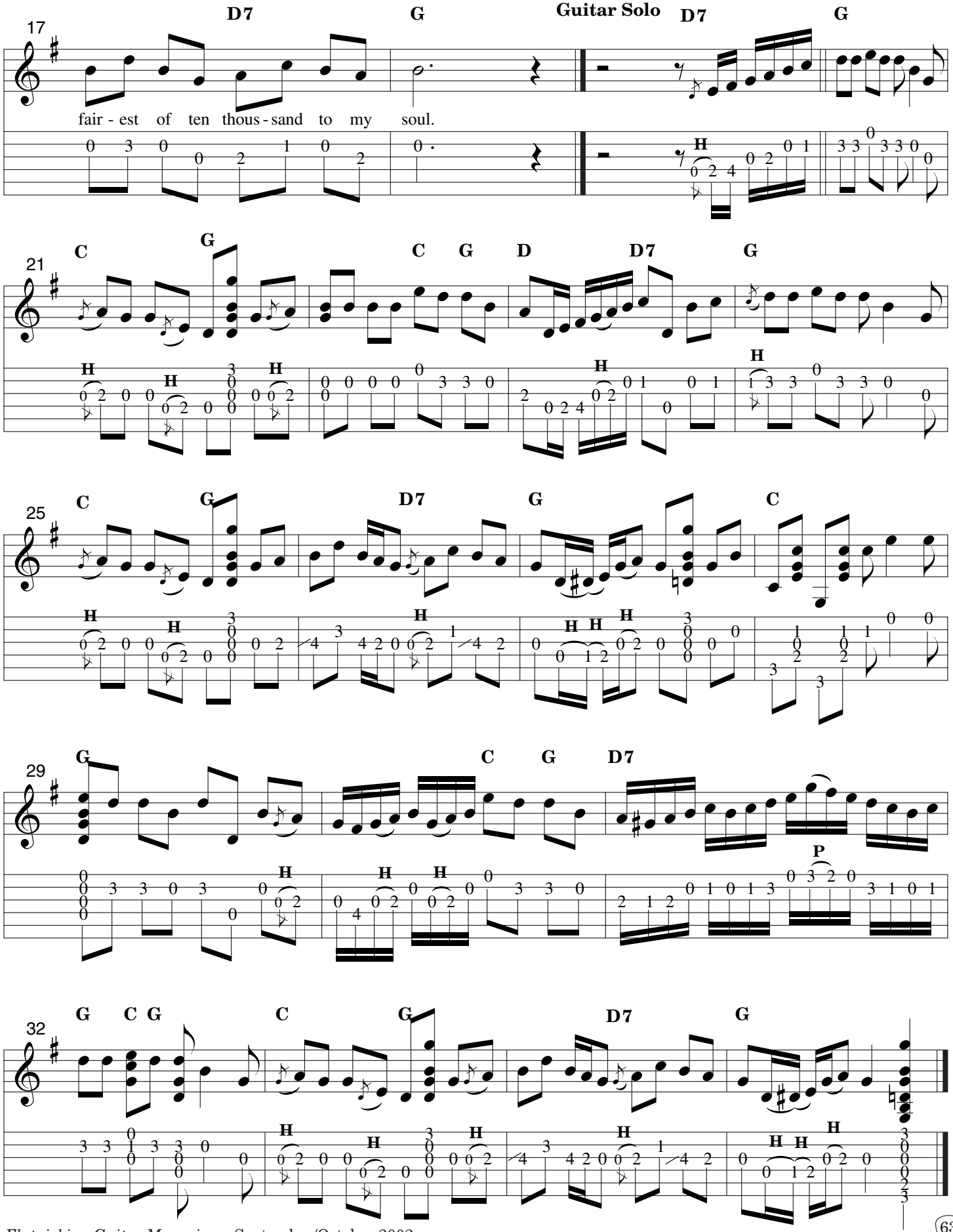

PICKIN' FIDDLE TUNES
by Adam Granger

ADAM GRANGER UNTABBED

WHERE'S THE TAB?

Complacency is a terrible thing. We get used to having one brand of cereal in the morning, to reading the paper in our favorite chair, and to opening *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* to the *Pickin' Fiddle Tunes* column and seeing tablature. So, in the interest of spontaneity and fresh ways of looking at things, I offer herewith a tabless tab column.

What follows instead is the transcript of an interview which Adam Granger conducted with Adam Granger on July 8, 2002. Adam Granger showed up at his bathroom mirror punctually at the designated time. He exhibited a relaxed demeanor and an easygoing attitude during the interview. He was voluble—chatty, even—and seemed particularly interested in getting his feelings about string gauges off his chest (he was visibly relieved and palpably more cheerful after that subject had been broached).

As the interview progressed, he became increasingly enthusiastic, not even interrupting his discourse when he went to pee (fortunately, it was a short walk from the interview site to the toilet, so the interviewer could still hear his words, upon every one of which he hung avariciously.)

What follows, then, is the interview in its entirety, except for a childhood anecdote about Adam's brother breaking a favorite fire truck. That story will be further developed and printed in an upcoming issue of *Whining Baby Boomer Magazine* (for which, not surprisingly, Adam is also a columnist).

READING *EASYTAB*

Easytab is like conventional tablature, except that timing notation has been streamlined and simplified. Since fiddle tunes are comprised mainly of eighth notes, *Easytab* uses the eighth note as its basic unit. An eighth rest is indicated by a dot. Therefore, a note with a dot after it is a quarter note, and a note with three dots after it is a half note. There are a total of eight notes and rests per measure.

FOR BEGINNERS

Pick with an alternating style: down-up-down-up-down-up etc. The first note of each measure should be a downstroke, the last an upstroke. **Include rests** in this alternating pattern. This keeps you "in synch", playing downstrokes on the beats, so that, no matter what the configuration of notes and rests in an eight-unit measure, the right hand plays them down-up-down-up-down-up-down-up.

THE ADAM GRANGER INTERVIEW

What do you do when people ask, "Should I buy this guitar?" (Imagine here a student or friend—or both—holding out a guitar for your consideration, a hopeful smile on his/her face.)

What the asker may be asking is whether or not I like the guitar, but that's not the question I answer. I check the instrument over for cracks and check the neck for straightness. Then I try to determine how much the person likes the instrument. Usually, they are already in love with it, and want me to second that emotion, as the old song says. It's not my place, however, to share their passion for that instrument. (If a friend were asking another friend if he should propose to a girl, the friend wouldn't say, "Oh, yes! I love her just as much as you do!") It's my job to make sure there aren't structural problems with the instrument and then to encourage them to buy it (if I think they really want it). Of course, if the person is a beginning guitarist and they've selected the wrong instrument *viz* their stated musical interests—a nylon stringed guitar for bluegrass music, for example—I would make sure they knew they were, as they say, deviating from the norm for the idiom.

Well, what about guitar prices?

We consumers are fortunate in that the new guitar market, like the computer market, is extremely competitive, and caters to a buying public that is, by and large, very well educated. There are really no bad deals in the new guitar market. It's very much a get-what-you-pay-for situation, from the hundred dollar "first guitar" up to the four thousand dollar custom job. I tell people simply to figure out how much they have to spend and then start looking in that range. They really can't go wrong: Once one gets past the $200 range, there aren't guitars out there that fall apart; those companies have been driven out of business by an intelligent and informed comsumer body.

One thing to watch for, as one asks around about guitars, is statements of personal preference disguised as fact. You'll hear, for example, "Grangertone guitars are junk!" Well, the fact is, of course, that Grangertone guitars are just fine. The speaker *means* "I don't care for Grangertones myself." Beware of this Opinion-in-Fact's-Clothing phenomenon as you ask around. You should retain the right to say, "I really like this Grangertone. I'm gonna buy it."

What about vintage guitars?

Now we're into an area with some risk involved, and one about which I know nothing. These are often bought from individuals who, being individuals, come in all ethical shapes and sizes. Vintage guitars can run to five figures before you can say "pre-war D-28 herringbone." *Caveat emptor*! Where the retail market is clearcut—a new Martin D-28 is a new Martin D-28—the vintage market is wide open in terms of what people think instruments are or shoud be worth.

Are you a vintage guitar *afficionado*?

I am in that school of professional musicians that sees instruments as tools, and not objects of adoration. I have no idea what a prewar D-28 herringbone sells for, and I can guarantee you that I will never own one. I can't tell the difference, visually or audially, between Sitka spruce and Bavarian spruce. My ability to discriminate ends at my ability to distinguish between mahogany and rosewood. Can others hear differences between Brazilian and East Indian rosewood? Tell Martin strings from D'Addario? Differentiate fossilized ivory bridge pins from ebony? I'm sure they can, but I'm equally sure I can't, so it doesn't make sense for me to spend money on these qualities.

Please note that there's nothing wrong with guitar-worship! I have several students who own over $50,000 in guitars. They hear the differences, they are passionate about their collections, they derive untold pleasure from having them and they generally lose relatively little money when it's time to trade them for other guitars. And let's not forget that multiple guitar owners help keep luthiers in business.

So what guitars *do* you use?

I own two flattop guitars: a Santa Cruz for acoustic and miked gigs and a Taylor with a dual amplification system in it for "plug-in" jobs.

You're not susceptible to GAS (Guitar Acquisition Syndrome)?

Thankfully, no. I know a lot of people who are, and that's fine with me. They've worked hard to get where they are in life, they make good money because they had the sense earlier in their lives to choose not to be professional musicians, and most of them richly deserve what they have. 'Nuff said.

You're lucky; I've got GAS bad! Well, moving on: Why do you use that weird tablature instead of the tab everyone else uses?

Most of the music we deal with is 2/4-based, using primarily eighth notes. With this relatively simple note make-up, it's not really necessary to depict measure after measure of eighth notes in the traditional way, with forests of note stems hanging down. By removing those and treating eighth notes as the default, the tab is decluttered and can be condensed almost double. *Granger's Fiddle Tunes for Guitar* would be two inches thick if I had used a standard tablature typesetting program.

Don't you get bored in lessons and at music camps and workshops?

I'd be lying if I said "Never," but it is rare. Each student is different, and has a different style of learning, a different agenda, a different schedule. An evening schedule of ten lessons will produce ten different experiences for me.

As for camps and workshops, I find the same to be true, but in a collective sense. There will often be a feel or a vibe to a group class, and there are generally one or two people who need a little hand-holding or other TLC. Giving everyone in a class what they want is a real challenge, and is far from boring. Also, when you get a room full of people (regardless of their skill level!) who are enthusiastic enough about the subject at hand to give up a week of their summer and pay money and travel to a camp or workshop location, the excitement and enthusiasm are inspiring and fun.

Isn't this flatpick guitar stuff really just the same thing over and over?

Well, yes and no. In order to avoid inadvertant plagiarism, I try not to look at other teachers' books and other materials. I am sure, however, that ninety percent of what I write and teach has been covered by others. If Steve Kaufman, Joe Carr, Orrin Star and I, for example, are all addressing the same issue, logic will lead us down very similar paths. That said, our pedagogical styles and personalities are different enough to yield a variety of learning experiences, even while discussing the same topic.

Why does this work, year after year? Why aren't we students bored?

For several reasons: First, and maybe most significant, there's the contagion of the above-mentioned enthusiasm and fun. Second, there's one heck of a lot of stuff to be covered, from repertoire to technique to improvisation. Third, each teacher, as mentioned, has a different way of absorbing, digesting and pooping out information. And fourth, no student can grasp it all the first time (or the second, or the third. . .) Think about the amount of information one is deluged with in a week-long music camp. If one absorbs and retains five percent of it one is doing well. It's a natural, healthy and productive system wherein one hears about, say, crosspicking from multiple teachers repeatedly over a period of years. Breakthroughs come when one teacher uses a certain phrase, or the student got a good night's sleep (rare at music camps), or they've heard it enough times to finally get it, or they hear three teachers talking simultaneously about the same topic.

Do you get nervous before performing?

Rarely, although I must say that it certainly is daunting to stand in front of the microphone on *A Prairie Home Companion* and know that every noise you make for the next four minutes or so will be heard by three million people, but I find that preparedness works wonders to combat nervousness.

What kind of strings and picks do you use?

I use Martin or D'Addario light gauge bronze. I can't hear any difference between the two brands, so I buy what's available and cheapest. When I first switched to light strings twenty years ago people thought I was a freak (although most people never knew I was using them; they just assumed I was using mediums!), but it's much more common now. Just as people came to realize that a small-bodied guitar can have big volume, they also came to see that light gauge strings are not necessarily quieter).

My crushes on picks tend to last four or five years, and then I move on. 25 years ago, I kept steady company with Fender extra heavies (I used to bring a micrometer to the music store to get the thickest ones possible). That was followed by flings with Claytons; Golden Gates; just normal old heavies—.80 mm or so; and, most recently, Pickboy Classic Pos-a-Grip GP41H heavies. They're 1 mm thick, and they've got nineteen little holes drilled in them. (I don't need the perforations for pick control, I jsut like the way they feel between my thumb and finger—sort of like a massage).

I have never been a fan of tortoiseshell picks because, again, I don't hear much difference between them and synthetic picks, and besides, I don't want to pay forty dollars for a pick. I lose too many picks.

You and me both! How do you fly with your guitar?

I switched to a gig bag twenty-five years ago, and flew with it for twenty years, stowing it in an overhead compartment. Then I started encountering shorter compartments in newer planes—especially turboprops and other smaller planes. (And, of course, 9/11 made things even worse for carrying a guitar on board.) For the past four years, I have put my guitar in a ProForm case, put a few strips of duct tape around the case and said a little prayer for it. So far, so good. . .

I hope your flying luck holds out. Do you practice?

Yes, but, like everyone, not nearly enough. When I do invest in some serious practice time, though, it really shows. Practice pays!

I hear that, brother! (laughter all around) Do you play scales?

Yes, big time. I also have a regimen of exercises, and I do a lot of chromatic scale practice.

Do you use a metronome?

Yes, for speed work, for tempo regulation (to keep from speeding up and slowing down through a piece of music), or simply as a rhythmic accompanist.

Thanks you for inviting me into your home, Adam, you've been a fascinating interview subject.

Thank *you* for having me. Adam.

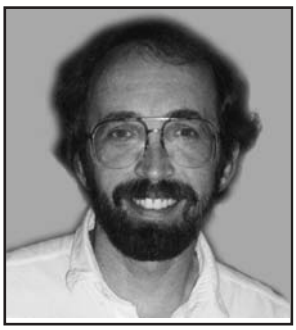
My most recent appearance on A Prairie Home Companion *was May 11, 2002, for a Mother's Day show. Garrison Keillor and I rewrote and performed three old songs, all mother-themed:* The Sweetest Gift a Mother's Smile, An Old Rocking Chair *and* Mama Tried. *Writing with Mr. Keillor is daunting: sitting across from me at his big round dining room table, he would say something like, "And now, let's write a verse about Kenneth Lay's mother losing all of her retirement funds in TIAA-CREF." I would lick my pencil and furrow my brow, and he'd be done.*

I also got to do a snazzy version of Alexander's Ragtime Band *with Pat Donohue, he fingerpicking and I flatpicking.*

Exploring Bluegrass Guitar

Bluegrass Classics

by Steve Pottier



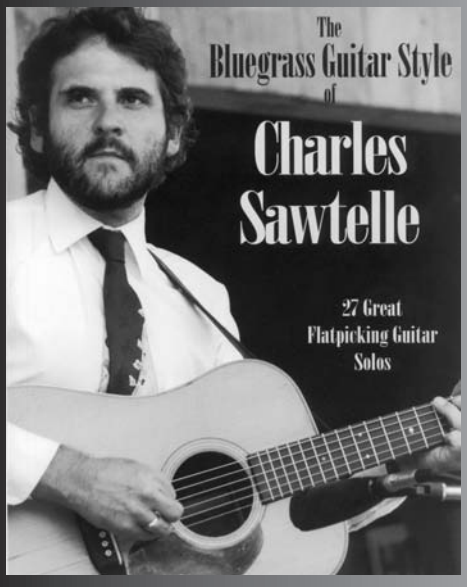
Ashes of Love

In the past two issues I've discussed how to create a break starting with the melody. Here is another approach to creating a break, starting from the melody. I've chosen "Ashes of Love," a Johnny & Jack song brought into the bluegrass repertoire by Jim and Jesse, the Shenandoah Cutups, Frank Wakefield, and others. I took the melody from a Shenandoah Cutups record, and it's actually the verse melody with the chorus words because I can remember the chorus better than any single verse! Really, the chorus is the same melody with some very slight changes to accommodate the trio. The Cutups play it in A.

Looking at the melody, you will see that there's generally only two or three notes to an eight note measure. The idea here will be a way to deal with these sparser melodies. Double up on the melody notes by playing the next higher or lower note in the scale, then coming back to the melody note. I did this with the second note of the melody, which is shown in measure 1 of the first guitar solo. In the third measure of the solo I doubled up by going down one note in the scale and back up for the first melody note, and I went up and back for the second melody note. I'm choosing which ones to do this to by ear. It doesn't have to be done on every note. In the thirteenth measure of that solo I actually went down two notes in the scale (3-0-3) for a change.

This sort of mechanical procedure gives you a way to start filling in the long spaces. Look at the second solo, measure 3. It starts with a long note, a quick note up and back down to the long note. This is a very important and well used fiddle technique to add more interest to a long bow. In the same measure is a rake to what looks like a C chord. I've heard a lot of people actually put a C chord in the backup here, but neither Johnny & Jack or the Cutups did—they kept it as strictly a two chord song. The fifth measure of this solo uses the long bow fiddle technique again. In the tenth measure I used the Django technique described by John Carlini in a recent column: "surround" the melody note, going below and then above it. Wait, that note below isn't in the scale!? TOO BAD! I like it. Finally, in the sixteenth measure, I add a neighboring note to create a seamless 8th note run to end the break. A good exercise would be to go back and see if you could create an entire seamless eighth note break. You probably wouldn't want to play it that way (at least I wouldn't) as you would tend to lose the phrasing sense of the song, but it would be great practice for seeing how to connect notes in the key of G.

This technique gives you several tools: How to deal with "long bow" type notes (as in the second solo M3 and M5), how to emphasize melody notes by doubling up on them, and how to eventually remove the seams by adding the in between notes (as in the second solo M16). This is an easy way to start building your own breaks.



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Ashes of Love

Words and Melody

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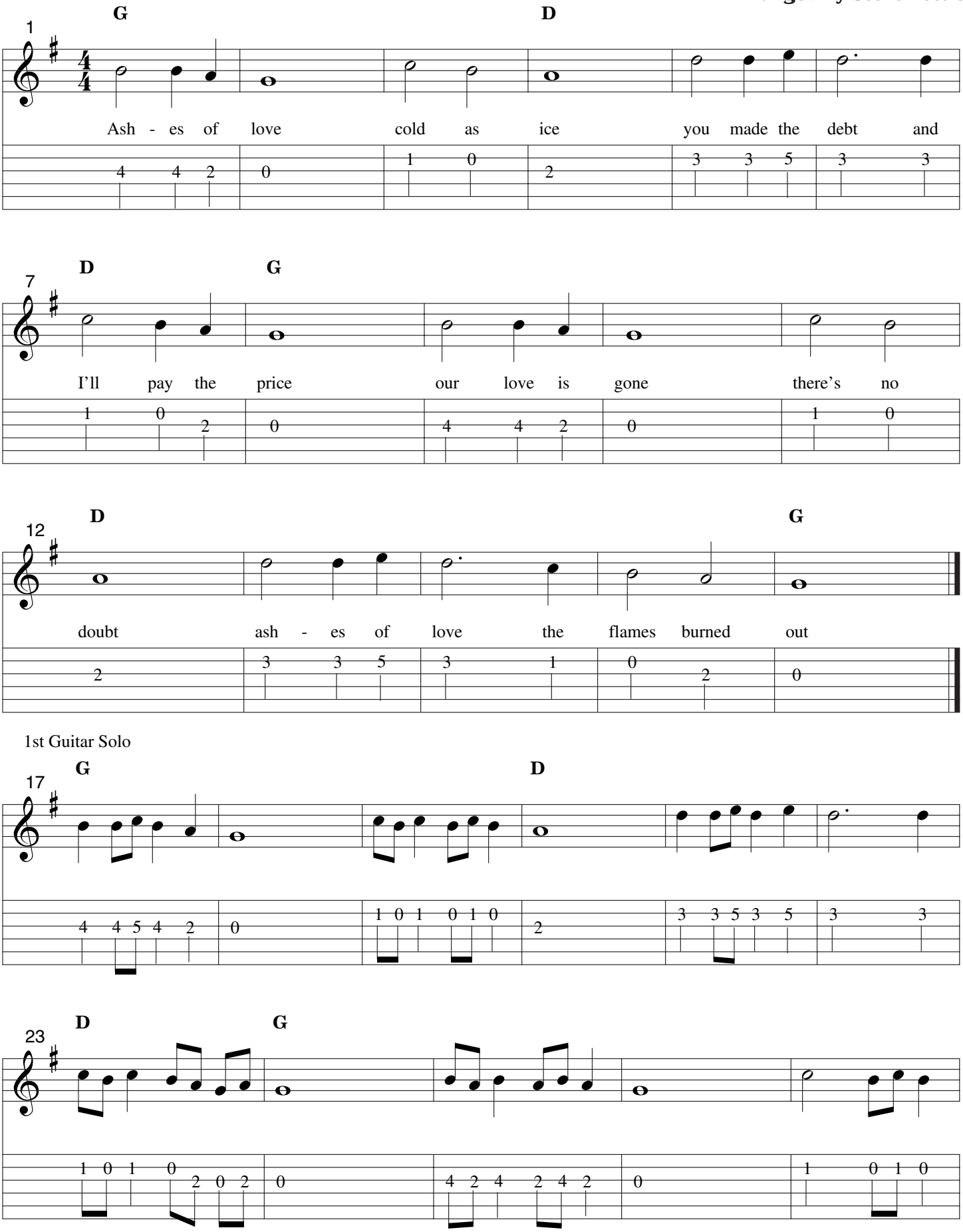
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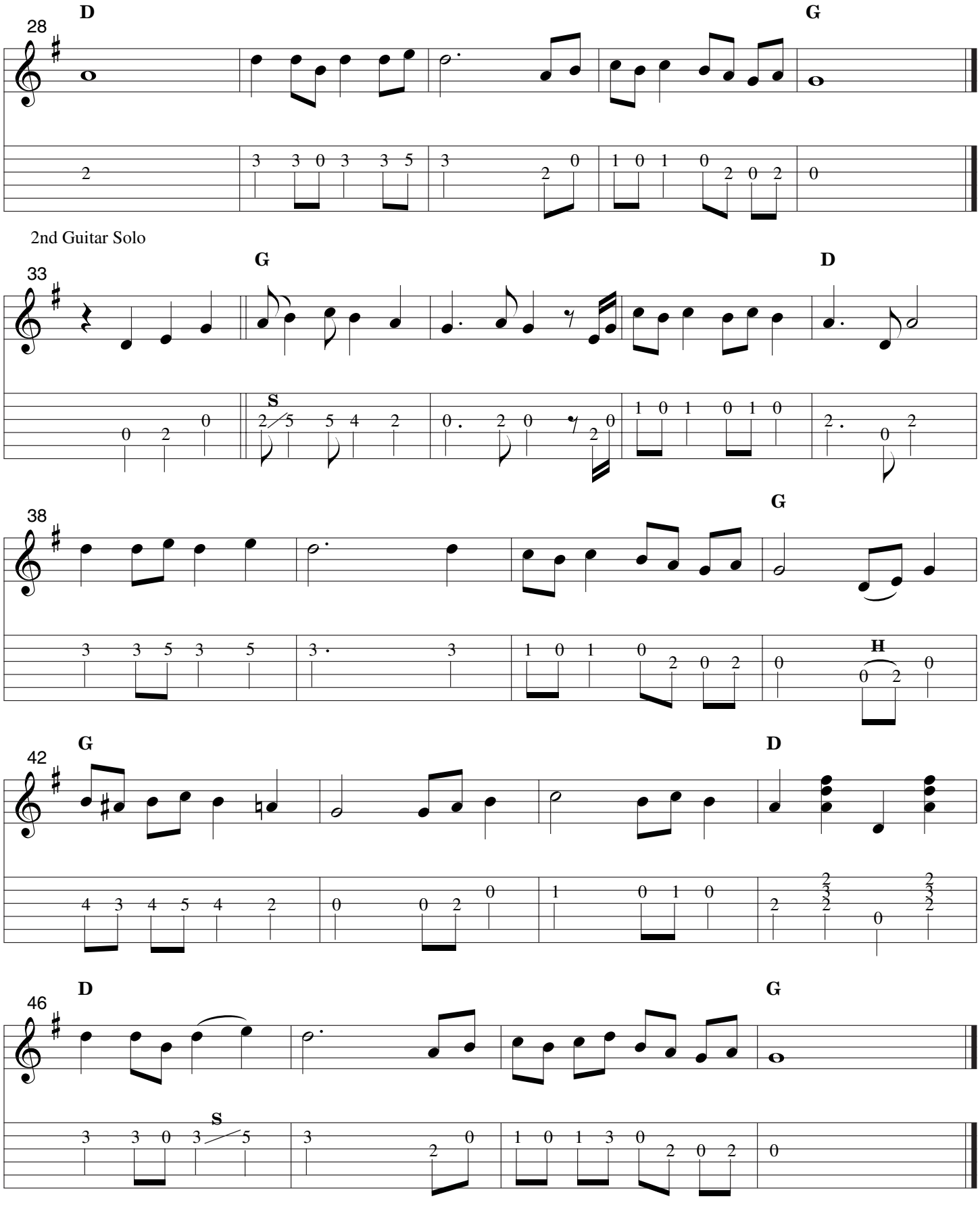

John McGann's Eclectic Acoustic

Champion Hounddogs
(An Open Letter to George Jones)

John McGann is a Boston based musician with four books about to be released by Mel Bay Publications: "Upslide" (transcriptions from John's Green Linnet solo CD) and "Creating Variations on American Fiddle Tunes", each book in guitar and mandolin editions.

Mr. George Jones, as an avid reader of *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*, I hope you will focus for a moment not on the guitar work, but the lyrics of this Chris Moore/Rust Farm song, and notice what a perfect vehicle it is for your soulful country voice. As you can hear, we tried to combine a honky tonk shuffle (12/8, or triplets over the 4/4 bass line) with an acoustic bluegrass sound. Now that you've heard the song, I can point out that the guitar breaks are straightforward, with a bit of crosspicking in the second break.

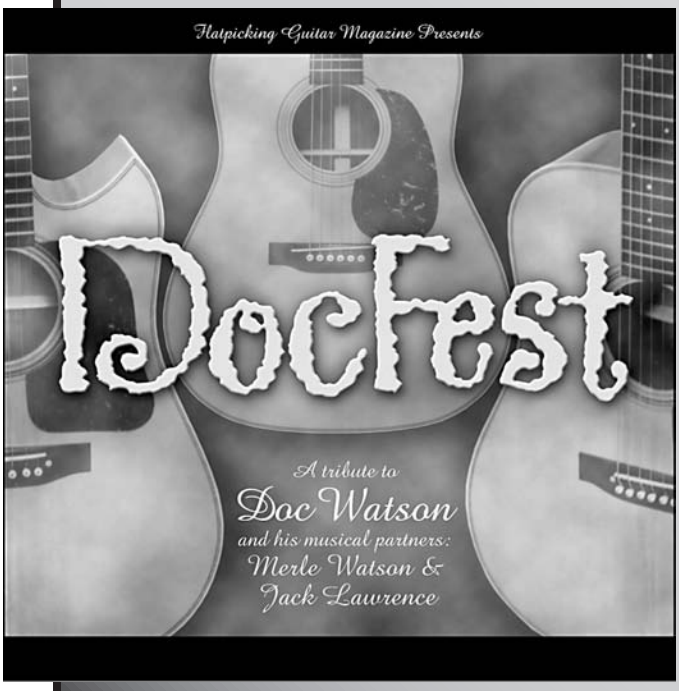
Thanks for listening, and for all the years of fantastic music you've shared.

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine pays tribute to

Doc Watson, Merle Watson & Jack Lawrence

with the release of a new musical tribute CD:

This CD includes eighteen tunes by many of today's top flatpickers. Each of the artist on this project were inspired to learn the song that they perform after first hearing the song performed by Doc Watson with one of his musical partners Merle Watson or Jack Lawrence. The CD includes Fourteen Vocals Songs and Four Instrumental Tunes as follows:



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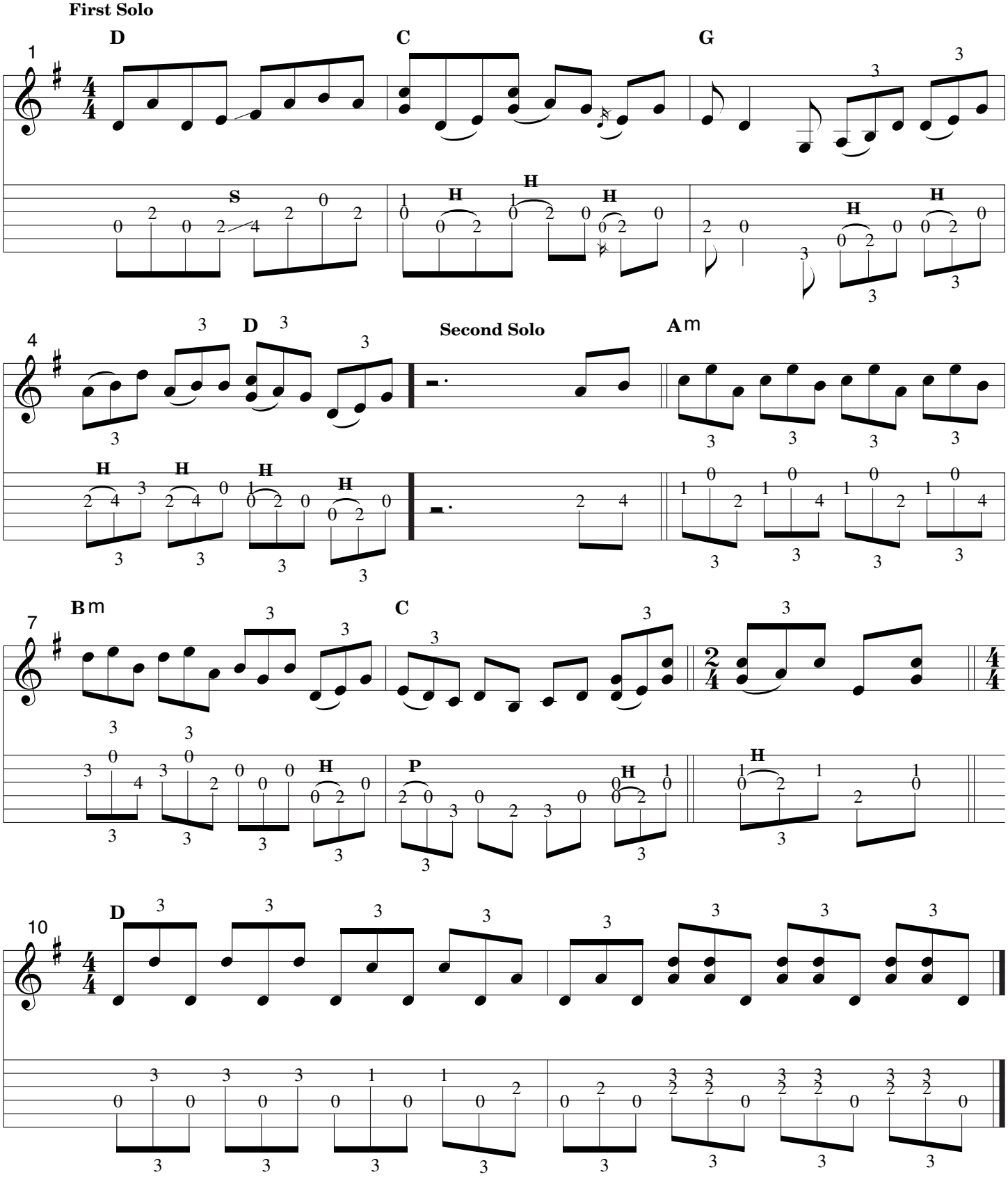

New Release Highlight
Jim Hurst: *Second Son*

by Dan Miller

Jim Hurst has recently released his first solo bluegrass project, *Second Son*. To say "it is a good one" is an understatement. Jim has selected material that is fresh and is joined by some of the best musicians (27 of them) in the business. On this recording Jim has managed to pay tribute to all of the bluegrass greats who have defined this music, yet does not copy or clone them. The flavor and feeling of these tunes are more Blue Highway and IIIrd Time Out than Bill Monroe or Flatt & Scruggs, but Jim's voice, guitar mastery, musical taste, and selection of musicians make this recording something uniquely all its own.

In an interview conducted at Jim's home in July of this year, he talked with *FGM* about the new project.

Tell me about the concept behind this project.

I've always wanted to do a bluegrass album. I grew up with bluegrass. When I was four years old I remember hearing the Stanley Brothers on the jukebox and all kinds of other people on WSM. I got away from it for a while. After searching around and playing different kinds of music and trying to be part of the country music biz I decided that I wanted to do something else. About that same time Claire Lynch called me for a gig. Working with a touring bluegrass artist introduced me into the bluegrass scene. You start to meet people and that opens door to a lot of things, and that is how *Open Window* came about. *Open Window* was an introduction to Jim Hurst as a whole musician, songwriter, and producer kind of thing. It was not a genre specific album.

I wanted this album to be a bluegrass album. Not bluegrass in the Stanley Brothers or Bill Monroe vein, because I feel like to pay homage to those people, you have to move on. You take what they did and move on. To copy them is flattery, but it doesn't get you anywhere. Who can copy the Osborne Brothers or the Stanleys anyway? The songs I found—with the exception of a few of them—were all new material. This project has been in my mind for fifteen years and it turned out better than I ever thought it would.

You have 27 different artists helping you on this recording. Was that your original intent?

Yes, it really was. I admire all of the pickers who were on there. I chose each one based on their style and they are all top notch at what they do. But also, they are top notch people. I get along with every one of them. I wanted the synergy of the album to be folks that I really dug as musicians and also as people. There were a whole lot more folks I wanted to be on the album, but there is only so much room and some people were not available. The hardest part of doing this album was scheduling everyone.

I like to pair people up with songs that would be good for them. I wanted songs that were cut and dried for them, something that they could just come in and put their signature on. I never really told anybody what to play because everyone has so much taste and so much class and they are there to support the artist and the album. They are not there to try to outshine anybody or try to play better than anybody. Everyone was hand-picked for their song for what they could bring to the recording and I thought everyone did an absolutely outstanding job.

I also didn't want to put a band of five people together to record this whole album because I didn't want this album to define "the Jim Hurst sound." I didn't want people to get the impression that this was going to be my band. I didn't want that to be a falsehood because I really don't know what I want to do live. I am going to do some dates to support this album, but my dates are fairly limited because Missy and I are so busy. I didn't want to box myself in and say, "This is my band and this who I am going to tour with." The people I would have wanted were already playing with other people, so that would not have worked. The band I got together right now is a chameleon of sorts. It is one of those things where you do one thing every two or three months and it is hard to box in a band when you play so infrequently.

What factors drove your song selection on this project?

I had a mindset as to what I wanted to do. I wanted some new material and I wanted an album that was more narrowly focused on bluegrass than *Open Window*. I also wanted to pay tribute to my dad in a public format. He died in '75 and I never got a chance to tell him "thanks." This is my tribute to him and my uncle. They used to play together quite a bit and they had a big influence on my music. That was another part of my decision regarding what to put on the album.

Step us through the song list and talk about why you chose each tune and also mention something about the players that are on each cut?

1. Steven's Deep Coal Mines: Written by Jim Hurst and Steve Hylton; Jim Hurst— guitar and vocal; Missy Raines—bass; Wayne Benson—mandolin; Stuart Duncan—fiddle; Rob Ickes—resophonic guitar

For me this became the strongest song on the album, not because I wrote it, but because it is more along the lines of where my thoughts were on the album as far as coming from my roots. My grandfather

worked in the mines; my dad worked in the mines; and the eastern Kentucky and eastern Tennessee mountains are where my family is from.

I never intended to have a banjo on this song. To me, the color of it was eerie, more fiddle and Dobro. As opposed to the things that are done on banjo, this song has a lonesome sound.

2. Big Iron: Written by Marty Robbins; Jim Hurst—guitar and vocal; Kent Blanton—bass; Ned Luberecki—banjo and harmony vocal; Jesse Brock—mandolin; Casey Driessen—fiddle; Randy Kohrs—resophonic guitar.

I can never come close to what Marty Robbins did as an entertainer and songwriter. But nobody hears this song anymore. The song has gone by the wayside. My brothers and I have done this song around the house for years and I am a big Marty Robbins fan. I've got all kinds of Marty Robbins albums. The thing about this song was that it seemed perfect for bluegrass and everybody on there fit it like a "T." I always wanted to pay homage to Marty, so that is why I put it on there.

Casey Driessen and Randy Kohrs are similar in that they are not bound by traditional values. They just reach back and get something that sounds good. It may even be a shriek or a noise. In that song, where it comes to the part where Texas Red's gun didn't even clear leather and the bullet came through and got him, Randy Kohrs did two harmonics to sound like the bullet ricocheting. He just did it off the cuff and it was perfect. Casey's fiddle is really mysterious sounding. He is doing the things that make the song work but he is also adding these little mysterious lines in the background. It is fun to take these songs and these musicians and see what they are going to do with them.

3. Our Old Home: Written by David Norris; Jim Hurst—guitar and vocal; Missy Raines—bass; Shawn Lane—mandolin and vocal harmony; Ron Stewart—fiddle

This song is really something to me. David Norris played this song in a session I did with him and the song just really got to me. It talks about how hard life is as a farmer, but it doesn't make any statements. It just says that it is hard. When it is hard they are complaining, not so people would notice, but they are complaining. And then when it is good, they are thanking the Lord that it is good.

He is also talking about the fact that the farm, or the old home place, is not like it used to be because of big corporations buying out farmers or land development. It is a statement of truth, but he is not harboring any resentment towards anybody or any modernization of any area. He is just making a statement and I like that. What it does is bring back to me the pride of the farmer. Which, to me, is absolutely one of the biggest problems in this country and nobody is addressing it except Willie Nelson and Farm Aid.

But it is also talking about memories. My dad always wanted to go home to Tennessee and live after we moved to Ohio. Whenever we would go back he would say, "It doesn't look the same." The song hit me deeply emotionally in a lot of ways. And the melody and the way everybody played it was great. Shawn Lane's harmony is chilling.

4. Lonesome Road Blues: Arranged by Earl Scruggs; Jim Hurst—guitar and vocal; Missy Raines—bass; Alison Brown—banjo; Wayne Benson—mandolin; Stuart Duncan—fiddle.

I wanted new material for this album, but I also wanted to do some old standards and this was one of them. "Lonesome Road Blues" was done off the cuff. When Alison, Stuart, and Wayne were in the studio recording this song worked out perfectly. I gave them two choices, "Lonesome Road Blues" or "My Window Faces the South." This one worked out perfectly because it brings Scruggs into the scene and these guys were "one take Jakes." We got in there, sat down and played it, and it was done. They just went in there and wore it out. It was great. This was one of the high points of the album. Watching Alison, Stuart, and Wayne play was amazing, and Missy too, all four of them shine throughout the album but this song in particular.

Not everybody does the lyrics on this one. There are a lot of copies of Earl's "Lonesome Road Blues," but not too many with lyrics. Everybody said, "I didn't know there were words to that." But I always heard dad singing it. I got the lyrics from him.

5. Wings Of An Eagle: Written by Jim Hurst; Jim Hurst—guitar and vocal; Kristin Scott Benson—banjo; Bobby Clark—mandolin; Shawn Lane—fiddle

I wrote this song in England after having a bad dream about my wife leaving me. Around here my wife gets up at 5:30 in the morning and I've come in from the road at about 2:00 in the morning. So a lot of times she gets up, kisses me on the cheek and then she's off to work. A lot of times I didn't even know she kissed me or talked to me.

In England I was missing her and thinking about her and our relationship trying to remember if I had been doing the simple things that are important. I had a dream that night that she had gotten up and she was gone. She didn't kiss me goodbye or say anything. I got up and everything was gone. In my dream it knocked me to my knees on the kitchen floor. She was gone and she didn't tell me why. All I wanted to do was tell her how much I loved her and ask her what I could do to keep her. And then I woke up in the London hotel room. It was an eye-opening thing.

We were coming home on the plane that day and I started scribbling lyrics to this song. I knew what I wanted to say, but I didn't know how to say it. It was the longest I've ever worked on one song trying to get my emotions and my thoughts down on paper so they made sense and worked lyrically and musically. It took me three years to write that song.

6. Stafford's Stomp: Written by Jim Hurst; Jim Hurst—guitar; Missy Raines—bass; Scott Vestal—banjo; Stuart Duncan—fiddle; Rob Ickes—resophonic guitar; Tim Stafford—second guitar

Curtis Jones, Missy Raines and I toured Europe with John Moore several years ago. During the trip I had been thinking about Tim Stafford's guitar playing. I think about his playing all the time anyway because he is a great technician, but also smooth as silk. I admire his guitar playing and I admire him as a person. Curtis Jones and I are probably two of his biggest fans. We were talking about his playing and messing with this song over there, but I could never get it to go where I wanted it to. I started with the influence of Tim's rhythm playing. I kept messing with it after we got back home it finally came out.

The first time I played it for Tim was when we were at your office [*FGM*]. If you remember, Tim was there shooting a video and I dropped by after visiting Huss & Dalton and picking up my new guitar from them. That was the first and only time that Tim had heard it before we went in to record. After that I asked him to play it with me on the album. It was about three

months later that he came in the studio. He came in, listened to the song a couple of times and then played it. Every time he played it he played something brilliant. I think the song fits him like a glove and he played it perfectly. It is a real honor to have him on there.

7. Widow's Weeds: Written by Claire Lynch and Jennifer Kimball; Jim Hurst—guitar and vocal; Missy Raines—bass; Alison Brown—banjo; Shawn Lane—mandolin and vocal harmony; Ron Stewart—fiddle.

Missy and I did this song with Claire at a demo session. Claire had written a few songs with Jennifer and some other people and was doing a demo session of several of those songs. I thought this song had an almost antique quality with the lyrics and its message, and the chord pattern was almost like a Stanley Brothers sound. I loved that sound and so Claire and Jennifer gave me the OK to record the song. I got people to play on it that I thought would make the song sound the best. Alison Brown's banjo playing is magical.

8. Sin's Dark Valley: written by George Peace; Jim Hurst guitar and vocal; Michael McLain—mandolin; Ray Deaton, Russell Moore and Jennifer McLain—harmony vocals.

My former pastor wrote this. He is a good friend to my whole family. He and his whole family are wonderful people. I heard the song in church when I was young and loved the song before I knew where it had come from. In church the song was sung without accompaniment, and it can stand alone that way. I always wanted to sing with Russell Moore and I appreciate Ray Deaton's bass singing and Jennifer McLain is a wonderful vocalist. It was the perfect combination to honor this beautiful song. We kept with a sparse instrumentation so that the focus would be on the vocals.

9. The Long Road: written by Tim Stafford; Jim Hurst—guitar and vocal; Todd Cook—bass; Charlie Cushman—banjo; Bobby Clark—mandolin; Rob Ickes—resophonic guitar.

I pestered Tim to give me a song for this record. I knew he had a bunch of songs, but he never had the time to put some on a CD and send to me. I think he finally sent me a CD of songs so that I would stop pestering him. "The Long Road" was the first song on the CD and the second time I heard it, it hit me, "That is the song for this album." It is a straight-out song about losing somebody. It is a great song and another way for me to say thanks to Tim.

10. Three Days Deep Forever Wide: Written by MontyCriswell/Wally Wilson/Jimmy Yeary; Jim Hurst—guitar and vocal; John Cowan—bass and harmony vocal; Scott Vestal—banjo; Wayne Benson—mandolin; Casey Driessen—fiddle; Randy Kohrs—resophonic guitar.

I wanted a couple of fast things on here and this is one of them. When I first heard this thing I thought that it sounded like something that the John Cowan Band or New Grass Revival might have done. I thought it would be another great opportunity for me to sing with John. As soon as I heard the song, I thought, "Yeah, John Cowan Band."

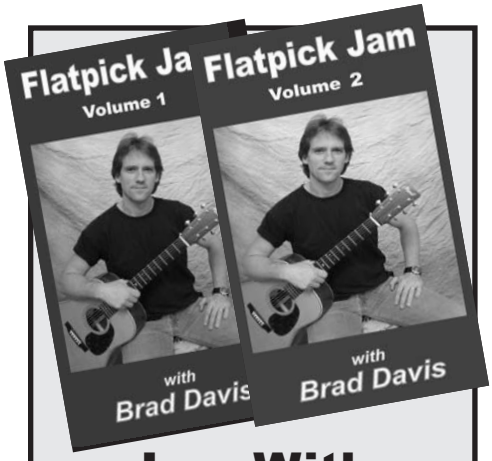
11. Seven Year Blues: Written by Charlie Louvin/Ira Louvin/Eddie Hill; Jim Hurst—guitar and vocal; Kent Blanton—bass; Alan O'Bryant—banjo; Roland White—mandolin; Ron Stewart—fiddle; Gene Wooten—resophonic guitar; Jeff White—harmony vocal

"Seven Year Blues" is a song that my dad and Uncle Eldon played together. I heard them do that a long time ago. The thing about Dad and Uncle Eldon is that they did a lot of songs but the topic never came up about where the song came from. They did a lot of Louvin Brothers and Blue Sky Boys and a lot of Carter family and Bill Monroe, but we never talked about where they came from. I never knew where that song came from until I was listening to a Louvin Brothers compilation. I took some liberties and changed a little bit of the lyrics because that is the way Dad sang it, not to insult the songwriters. It was a tribute to the memory of my dad and my uncle.

12. Danny Boy: Written by F.E. Weatherly; Jim Hurst—guitar and vocal

This is a tribute to my dad. As I got the song recorded it seemed perfect with just the guitar and me because that is the way that Dad did it in the kitchen. It keeps the same effect that I had in the kitchen listening to Dad play it. It was recorded with one take on the guitar and one take on the vocal. It was very emotional. When I sang it, it was all I could do to keep from stopping. Emotions and images hit you when you are doing something like that. Hopefully it transfers to the audience. I think it was a fitting end to the album.

It is evident upon the first listening that Jim has put his heart and soul into every cut of this project. He also put a lot of thought into everything from the song selection, to the instrumentation, to the musicians who he chose to record on each tune. A phrase you often hear regarding bluegrass music is that it "comes from the heart and sung through the nose." While you can't say that the deep and resonant sound of Jim's voice is sung through the nose, you can certainly tell this recording comes from the heart. Jim's voice and guitar fill these songs with emotion and give them an energy that draws you in. I highly recommend Jim Hurst's *Second Son*.



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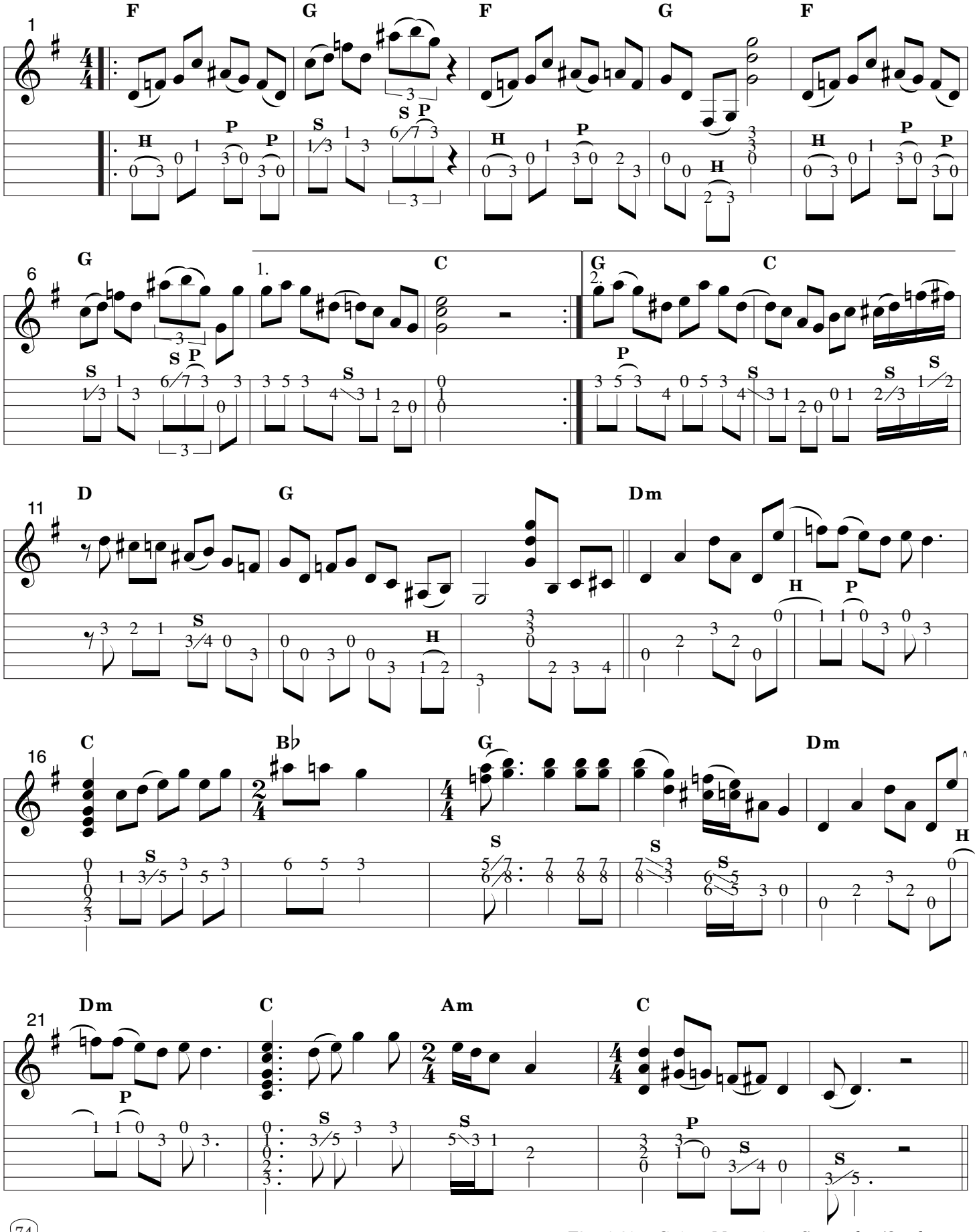
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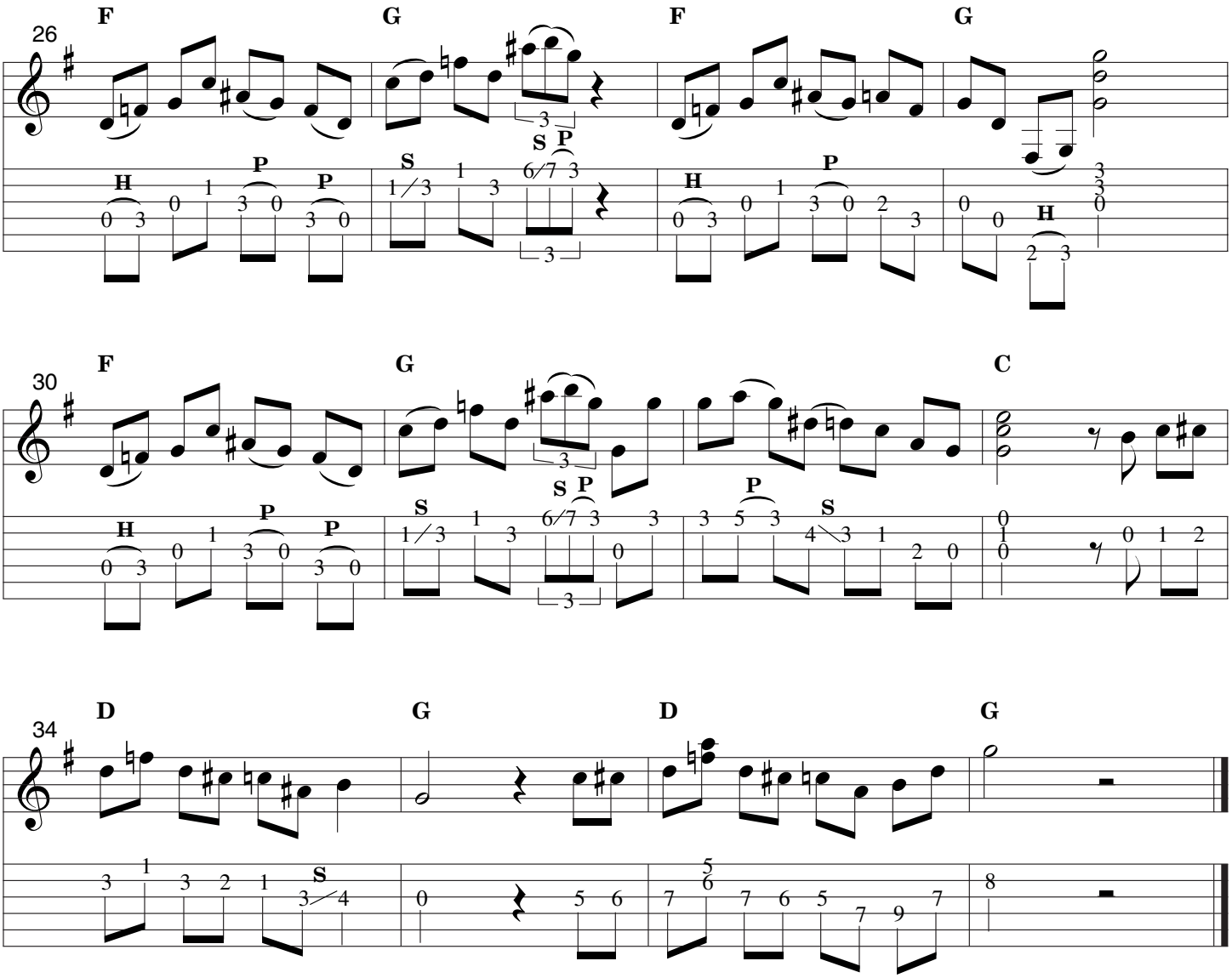
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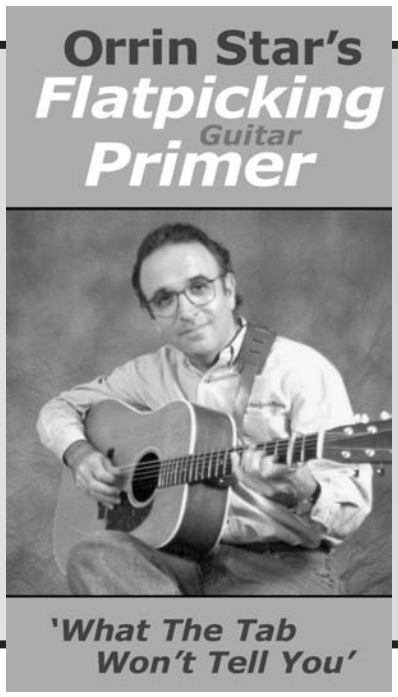

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SUG-CD-3945
reviewed by Chris Thiessen

Maybe I'm just unlucky, but for me, most "greatest hits" compilations have always been the acoustic equivalent of a grocery store's "10 items and under" line: a promise of fulfillment inevitably hindered by an item or two too many. So I approached *Chambergrass* (subtitled *A Decade of Tunes From the Edges of Bluegrass*) with a certain hesitation. Admittedly, during the band's life (1975-1990), I was not a fan. I was familiar with the individual artists (less with John Hickman's work than Berline or Crary), but for some reason a BCH LP or CD never found its way into my album collection.

As a flatpicker I've acquired multiple Crary items (LPs, CDs and instructional videos). That just goes without saying. But there was something about the BCH combo that just didn't speak to me. Perhaps—as Dan Crary suggests in his excellent CD notes—I felt they "weren't really bluegrass," based either on my "traditional" (Monroe/Flatt & Scruggs/Stanley) model or my "progressive" (Seldom Scene/Newgrass Revival) model. Almost wistfully, Dan notes that BCH was "…often defined by what they 'lacked'…"

But whatever I may have expected was far from what I experienced. Yes, BCH was certainly unlike any kind of "bluegrass" I had heard. But from my headphone-point-of-view, I don't think BCH lacked anything. As BCH, Berline, Crary and Hickman were three artists, confident and mature in their skills, who carefully crafted a musical style that fell short only of their critics' expectations. At one point in his CD notes Dan uses the term "chambergrass" as a negative label. But in pure artistic content I can't see any difference between the Grisman quintet/quartets and the BCH trio: both successfully stretched the limits of acoustic music, sometimes (unfortunately) beyond their listeners' musical horizons.

What struck me most were the nuances, the subtleties of phrasing, and the ability of the musicians to anticipate what each other was doing. In several tunes (like "Fall Creek" or any of the traditional fiddle tunes), the tune's musical signature bounces back and forth between the banjo, guitar and fiddle, allowing the musicians not playing lead to play a complex note-for-note, string-for-string harmonic line. And the recording quality is excellent: it's almost impossible to tell the studio versions from the live versions, until the audience applauds. These 15 instrumentals showcase superb artists playing for the sheer and simple joy of playing well together.

For me, though, the icing on the CD is Crary's guitar work. I've attended several of his Taylor-sponsored seminars and have been avidly reading his column here in *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*. Simply put, Chambergrass is an advanced course in rhythm and solo guitar work in a small ensemble, and should provide anyone with hours of study material. Crary's ability to complete and enhance the musical fabric is just phenomenal.

After listening to this CD numerous times, "Early Times" emerged as my current personal favorite. It reminds me of the infectious energy of the old-time Georgia string bands, but held in artistic check. I especially enjoyed the harmonics and muted strings Crary plays under Berline's leads. But I've only started to listen to this CD. As I said, there's sufficient material to keep me busy for quite a while.

So, is this a "must buy?" Hard-core BCH fans probably already have all the albums from which these instrumentals were extracted. But if you don't currently have a BCH album in your collection, it is a delight to hear Dan Crary working in this ensemble. As the weather starts to cool, consider this CD as woodshed material for the winter—and just plain great listening as well.

Song List: Forked Deer; Big Dog; Fall Creek; Bonaparte's Retreat; Pistol Pete; Fisher's Hornpipe; Night Run; Turkey in the Straw; Under the Double Eagle; Henry's Hornpipe; Early Times; Storm Over Oklahoma; The Dusty Miller; Old Time Medley; Cricket

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Too Blue
A Little On The Blue Side

Reviewed by Dave McCarty

Female flatpickers have an unfair advantage over us guys, if you think about it. Most guys are so competitive and driven that deep inside we're all convinced that if we work hard enough at our playing we could be, if not the next Tony Rice or Clarence White, then maybe another Allen Shadd or Mark Cosgrove. Most women, of course, are much too smart to ever believe that they can achieve such exalted technique, so they typically concentrate on making the best-sounding, most musical guitar playing possible.

That's certainly the case with Betsy Rome, well known for her frequent and lucid contributions to the FLATPICK-L list and the subject of a recent profile in *FGM* (Vol 4, No 3). As guitarist with New York-based Too Blue, Betsy plays her 1985 Brazilian Santa Cruz Tony Rice guitar with a direct, highly effective approach. She's not flashy, but that's her strength. Clever, insightful intros, outros, solos and backup parts flow from her guitar like a blue mountain brook rollicking downstream. Everything about her playing is catchy and infectious, the sign of a total pro. Her solo on "Too Good To Be Bad" hits just the right feel for the tune's swingy tempo.

Her band's new CD, *A Little On The Blue Side*, includes 13 original tunes written by Rome and banjoist Joan Harrison. Stylistically, the recording includes some uptempo, bouncy bluegrass and some catchy swing tunes played on mandolin, guitar, bass, banjo and fiddle. Joan and Betsy share the vocal chores, giving the band a sound reminiscent of the later, great Good Ole Persons.

Putting together a CD of all-original material poses a great challenge to any band, and for the most part, the tunes here stand up very well. "Two Dogs" is a very clever story of two lovers trying to find a way to get along, while "Too Little Too Late" recreates the kind of swinging bluegrass popularized by some of the early brother duets. All in all, both women clearly know what makes a great song and how to deliver it effectively.

Instrumentally, the band shines. Harrison is a fine banjo player, and Michael Sassano's mandolin is equally effective. Guest fiddler Joyce Andersen artfully walks the line between swing and bluegrass fiddling. Rome's guitar, though, really carries the day. Filled with clever slides, double-stops, cross-picking and other melody-enhancing techniques, she has an exceptional feel for laying the right phrase down at the right time.

Too Blue makes an auspicious debut with this CD, offering clever songs, good singing, strong instrumentals and great flatpicking in a well-recorded package. After a few listens to this one, I predict the hyper competitive boys out there will be copping more than a few licks from Ms. Rome, if they can.

Song list: The Leaving Kind; Blue Side; Two Dogs; Start All Over; Three Rivers; When The Bloom Is Off The Rose; Too Good To Be Bad; Morning Dew; Too Little Too Late; Brand New Blues; Emma's Dilemma; Bad News; Full Time Job

Adam Granger &
John Plomondon
Swing Guitar Live!

Reviewed by Dave McCarty

Recorded live at their weekly gig in the Brasserie Zinc in Minneapolis, *FGM* columnist Adam Granger and cohort John Plomondon have crafted a remarkable CD of swing guitar music that showcases their unique tastes and talents.

Take a moment to look over the song list to see what I mean. Virtually every tune included here is a jazz vocal classic, and there's hardly a typical swing guitar tune like "Swing 42" or "Sweet Georgia Brown" to be found. By concentrating on tunes with great vocal traditions, John and Adam free themselves from having to play hot licks and flashy solos. Playing in a relaxed, confident style that comes from playing a gig over and over, both guitarists kick back and play compelling, cohesive solos that "sing" the melodies of these great tunes.

Recorded live direct to a Sony MiniDisc recorder from a single stereo mic placed out front from the P.A., the disc captures a lot of ambient crowd noise, giving a truly "live" feel to the overall sound. Both men clearly enjoy playing with each other, and take the opportunity to urge each other on from time to time, adding to the CD's friendly, spontaneous quality.

Neither guitar fits into the Gypsy swing tradition, although either could clearly handle the demands of Django Reinhardt's guitar-driven acoustic jazz style. Here, the concentration is on clever arrangements that extract the maximum tone and soul from their flattop acoustic guitars. If you're looking for furiously fast flatpicking, try one of the European Gypsy jazz masters like Bireli Lagrene or Stochelo Rosenberg. But for sweetly phrased, intelligently rendered swing guitar, Granger and Plomondon have recorded a wonderful CD that will please any guitarist who appreciates acoustic jazz guitar in addition to traditional flatpicking. Strongly recommended.

Song List: My Heart Belongs To Daddy; Ain't Misbehavin'; Stormy Weather; Oh, Lady Be Good; The More I See You; As Time Goes By; Making Whoopee; Spanish Eyes; Sentimental Journey; Besame Mucho; I Can't Give You Anything But Love; The Cuckoo Waltz

"My friends all laughed when I said 'I'll sing harmony.' But they didn't know my secret..."

I never was any kind of singer, I could play a few instruments okay, but when everybody leaned their heads together for some harmonizing, I just didn't fit in. I couldn't hear what vocal went where! I just figured it took talent to be able to sing harmony, and I didn't have it.

Then I met this guy at the festival in Bean Blossom. We were doing a little shade-tree picking, and he was singing wonderfully. When we finished "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," he asked me why I didn't join in on harmony.

"I can't harmonize," I said. "I didn't want to mess up your singing by sounding like a bullfrog in heat."

"Sure you can harmonize! Why, I'd even give you this guitar if I can't teach you right now how to do the tenor harmony!"

Well, he had me singing a good tenor harmony so easily I just couldn't believe it. Singing harmony was a skill, not a big mystery!

"How did you learn to teach harmony like that?"

"It's not hard," he replied. "let me loan you my CDs, and you'll see my secret."

He handed me a CD pack entitled "how To Sing Bluegrass Harmony"--a mail-order course! I never bought a mial-order course. I just couldn't thrust I'd get good instruction from something I couldn't try out right away.

He told me, "This course came with a guarantee...if I didn't think it was good within 10 days, I'd get my money back. And it couldn't hurt to try it with a guarantee!"

"But you could sing harmony a little, so you could learn quicker--"

"nope! I sang harmonhy like a bullfrog in heat, too!"

We laughed, and he left me with a cheerful, "Try those tapes out."

Well, I played that course all the way home in my car, and I sang til I was hoarse. I sure felt like I was learning... but the real test was yet to come.

Next Tuesday I met with my pickin" buddies, like I always do. Just before we started "Fox On The Run," I told my friends I was going to sing harmonhy. They all laughed (I knew they would), and Charlie cracked, "What kind of harmony? Froggy tenor?"

"Let's just do it," Isaid. "I got a surprise for you boys."

They kept giggling, but you should've seen their faces when I started singing harmony. They were amazed. Charlie even accused me of getting 'harmony surgery' instead of going to Bean Blossom. Naturally, they all wanted to learn mhy secret. I just smiled, and said "Harmony singing is a skill as much as a gift. And this course got me working mhy skill the right way."

If you never thought you could sing bluegrass harmony, you ought to try this course. It's guaranteed. And who knows---your "bullfrog tenor" days may soon be over!

How to Sing Bluegrass Harmony Vol 1 Ain't Nobody Gonna Miss Me When I 'm Gone, Old Home Place, Fox On The Run, I Wonder Where You Are Tonight, House Of The Rising Sun, Banks Of The Ohio, Ramblin' Letters, Someday We'll Meet Again Sweetheart, Don't That Road Look Rough and Rocky, On My Way Back To The Old Home, Hit Parade of Love, Walking In Jerusalem Just Like John, Chalk Up Another One, Ocean Of Diamonds, This Heart Of Mine, The Man in the Middle, Dark Hollow, Will The Circle Be Unbroken, I Saw the Light, Salty Dog. (2 CD's) $24.95

How to Sing Bluegrass Harmony Vol 2 Happy Birthday to You, Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arms, Rocky Top, Mountain Dew, Uncle Pen, Pig in a Pen, On and On, Nobody's Love Is Like Mine, White Dove, Buckin' Mule, Columbus Stockade Blues, Take Your Shoes Off Moses, Beautiful Life, Cryin' Holy, Shady Grove, Paradise, Think of What You've Done, Cabin Home on the Hill, How Mountain Girls Can Love, Old Slewfoot, East Virginia Blues, Way Downtown, Your Love is Like a Flower, House of Gold, Little Georgia Rose, Love Come Home, Amazing Grace, Swing Low Sweet Chariot, Long Journey Home, Catch a Train and Ride, Two Different Worlds. (2 CD's) $24.95

How to Sing Bluegrass Harmony Vol 3 I Just Think I'll Stay Around, Love Me Darlin' Just Tonight, Why Don't You Tell Me So, Cryin' My Heart Out Over You, Legend of the Rebel Soldier, My Walkin' Shoes Don't Fit Me Anymore, Gonna Paint the Town, I'm Goin' Back to Old Kentucky, Hold Whatcha Got, Wayfaring Stranger, Don't Let Your Deal Go Down, Head over Heels in Love with You, In the Pines, Ride Me Down Easy, Prisoner's Song, Little Girl of Mine in Tennessee, No Mother or Dad, I'm Waiting to Hear You Call Me Darlin', Take this Hammer, Cabin in Caroline, Some Old Day, 'Til the End of the World Goes Round, Travelin' Down this Lonesome Road, One Tear, Roustabout, Your Old Love Letters, Make Me a Pallet on Your Floor, Blue Moon of Kentucky. (2 CD's) $24.95

How to Sing Gospel Harmony Going Up, Farther Along, It's Me Again Lord, What a Friend We Have in Jesus, Prayer Bells from Heaven, Preachin' Prayin' Singin', Happy on My Way, He Will Set Your Fields on Fire, Let the Sun Shine Down, Hallelujah I'm Ready, Gathering Flowers for the Master's Bouquet, Heaven's Light Shining on Me, Jordan, Are You Washed in the Blood of the Lamb, Over in the Gloryland, The Wicked Path of Sin, Life's Railway to Heaven, Brush Arbor Meeting, Put Your Hand in the Hand, Just a Little Talk with Jesus. (2 CD's) $24.95

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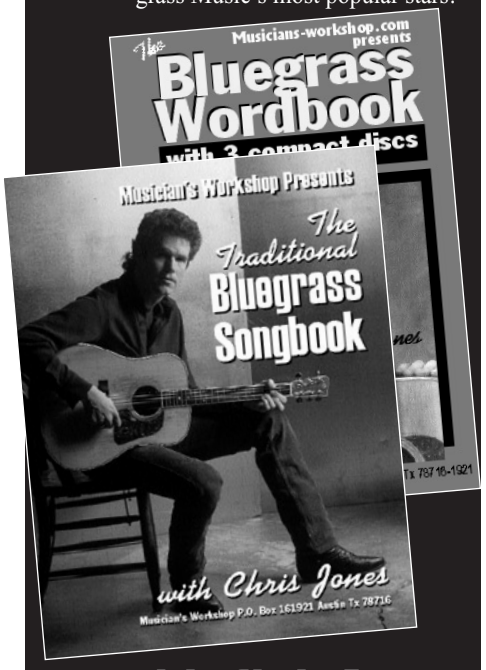

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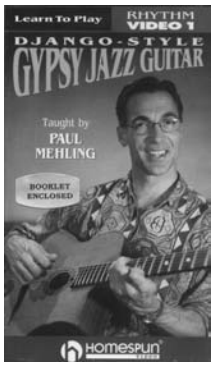

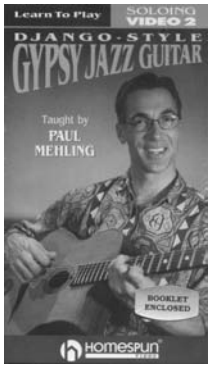

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